HOUSE OF COMMONS
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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, June 7, 2018
(Part A)

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 7, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1005)

[*Translation*]

COMMISSIONER OF LOBBYING

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table, pursuant to section 11 of the Lobbying Act, the report of the Commissioner of Lobbying for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2018.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), this document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

[*English*]

I have the honour to lay upon the table the annual reports on the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act of the Commissioner of Lobbying for the year 2017-18.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), these reports are deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Speaker: The interpretation is not working. I think we had better pause.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 10:07 a.m.)

● (1015)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 10:16 a.m.)

* * *

[*Translation*]

INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table, pursuant to Section 38 of the Access to Information Act, the report of the Information Commissioner for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2018.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), this document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

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[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to one petition.

While I am on my feet, I move:

That the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1055)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 738)

YEAS

Members

Aldag
Alghabra
Alleslev
Amos
Arseneault
Arya
Ayoub
Badawey
Bagnell
Bains
Baylis
Beech
Bibeau
Bittle
Blair
Bossio
Bratina
Breton
Brison
Caesar Chavannes

Carr
Casey (Cumberland Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger
Chen
Cormier
Cuzner
Dabrusin
Damoff
DeCourcey
Dhaliwal
Dhillon
Di Iorio
Drouin
Dubourg
Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
El-Khoury
Ellis
Erskine-Smith
Eyking
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Finnigan
Fisher
Fonseca
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry
Fuhr
Garneau
Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Graham
Hardie
Harvey
Hébert
Hogg
Holland
Housefather
Hussen
Hutchings
Iacono
Joly
Jones
Jordan
Jowhari
Khalid
Khera
Lambropoulos
Lametti
Lamoureux
Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Leslie
Levitt
Lockhart
Long
Longfield
Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Massé (Avignon La Mitis Matane Matapédia)
McCrimmon
McDonald
McGuinty
McKay
McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès
Mendicino
Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie Le Sud-Ouest Île-des-Soeurs)
Monsef
Morrissey
Murray
Nassif
Nault
Ng
O'Regan
Ouellette
Paradis
Peschisolido
Peterson
Petitpas Taylor
Philpott
Picard
Poissant
Qualtrough
Ratansi
Rioux
Robillard
Rodriguez
Rogers
Romanado
Rota
Rudd
Ruimy
Rusnak
Sahota
Saini
Samson
Sangha
Scarpaleggia
Schiefke
Schulte
Serré
Shanahan
Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission Matsqui Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand
Simms
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Tassi
Tootoo
Vandal
Vandenbeld
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskyj
Young — 154

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Anderson
Aubin
Barlow
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Benson
Benzen
Bergen
Bernier
Berthold
Bezan
Blaikie
Blaney (North Island Powell River)
Block
Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet
Brassard
Brosseau
Calkins
Cannings
Caron
Carrie
Choquette
Clarke
Clement
Cooper
Cullen
Davies
Deltell
Diotte
Doherty
Donnelly
Dubé
Falk (Battlefords Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)
Fast
Fortin
Gallant
Garrison
Genuis
Gill
Gladu
Godin
Gourde
Hardcastle
Harder
Jeneroux
Jolibois
Kelly
Kitchen
Kmiec
Kusie
Lake
Laverdière
Lloyd
Lobb
MacGregor
MacKenzie
Malcolmson
May (Saanich Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops Thompson Cariboo)
Miller (Bruce Grey Owen Sound)
Motz
Nantel
Nicholson
Obhrai
Paul-Hus
Pauzé
Poilievre
Quach
Rankin
Reid
Richards
Sansoucy
Scheer
Schmale
Shields
Shipley
Sopuck
Sorenson
Stanton
Stetski
Strahl
Sweet
Thériault
Tilson
Trost
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warawa
Warkentin
Waugh
Webber
Weir
Wong
Yurdiga
Zimmer — 100

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL SECURITY ACT, 2017

The House resumed from May 28 consideration of the motion that Bill C-59, An Act respecting national security matters, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are now at second reading of Bill C-59, an omnibus national security bill that the government introduced on June 20, 2017.

At the time, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness decided not to give Bill C-59 second reading and sent it directly to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. He said that committee meetings were needed to get additional information in order to improve the bill, so that is what we did.

During the committee's study of Bill C-59, 235 amendments were proposed. The Conservative Party proposed 29 and the Green Party 45. The Liberals rejected all of them. Four NDP amendments and 40 Liberal amendments were adopted. Twenty-two of the Liberal amendments had more to do with the wording and with administrative issues. The Liberals also proposed one very important amendment that I will talk about later on.

The committee's mandate was to improve the bill. We, the Conservatives, undertook that work in good faith. We proposed important amendments to try to round out and improve the bill presented at second reading. The Liberal members on the committee rejected all of our amendments, even though they made a lot of sense. The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security held 16 meetings on the subject and heard from a number of witnesses, including people from all walks of life and key stakeholders in the security field. In the end, the government chose to reject all of our amendments.

There were two key points worth noting. The first was that under Bill C-59, our security agencies will have fewer tools to combat the ongoing terrorist threat around the world. The second was that our agencies will have a harder time sharing information.

One important proposal made in committee was the amendment introduced by the Liberal member for Montarville regarding the perpetration of torture. Every party in the House agrees that the use of torture by our intelligence or security agencies is totally forbidden. There is no problem on that score. However, there is a problem with the part about torture, in that our friends across the aisle are playing political games because they are still not prepared to tell China and Iran to change their ways on human rights. One paragraph in the part about torture says that if we believe, even if we do not know for sure, that intelligence passed on by a foreign entity was obtained through torture, Canada will not make use of that intelligence. For example, if another country alerts us that the CN Tower in Toronto is going to be blown up tomorrow, but we suspect the information was extracted through some form of torture, we will not act on that intelligence if the law remains as it is. That makes no sense. We believe we should protect Canadians first and sort it out later with the country that provided the intelligence.

It is little things like that that make it impossible for us to support the bill. That element was proposed at the end of the study. Again, it was dumped on us with no notice and we had to vote on it.

There are two key issues. The national security and intelligence review agency in part 1 does not come with a budget. The Liberals added an entity, but not a budget to go with it. How can we vote on an element of the bill that has no number attached to it?

Part 2 deals with the intelligence commissioner. The Liberals rejected changes to allow current judges, who would retire if appointed, and retirees from being considered, despite testimony from the intelligence commissioner who will assume these new duties. Currently, only retired judges are accepted. We said that there are active judges who could do the work, but that idea was rejected. It is not complicated. It makes perfect sense. We could have the best people in the prime of their lives who may have more energy than those who are about to retire and may be less interested in working 40 hours a week.

● (1100)

In part 3 on the Communications Security Establishment, known as CSE, there are problems concerning the restriction of information. In fact, some clauses in Bill C-59 will make capturing data more complicated. Our intelligence agencies are facing additional barriers. It will be more difficult to obtain information that allows our agencies to take action, for example against terrorists.

Part 4 concerns the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the privacy issue often come up in connection with CSIS. A common criticism of Bill C-51 is that this bill would allow agencies to breach people's privacy. Witnesses representing interest groups advocating for Canadians' privacy and people whose daily work is to ensure the safety of Canadians appeared before the committee. For example, Richard Fadden said that the agencies are currently working in silos. CSIS, the CSE, and the RCMP work in silos, and the situation is too complex. There is no way to share information, and that is not working.

Dr. Leuprecht, Ph.D., from the Royal Military College, Lieutenant-General Michael Day from the special forces, and Ray Boisvert, a former security adviser, all made similar comments. Conservative amendment No. 12 was rejected. That amendment called for a better way of sharing information. In that regard, I would like to remind members of the Air India bombing in 1985. We were given the example of that bombing, which killed more than 200 people on a flight from Toronto to Bombay. It was determined that this attack could have been prevented had it been easier to share information at the time.

The most important thing to note about part 7, which deals with the Criminal Code, is that it uses big words to increase the burden for obtaining arrest warrants to prevent terrorist acts. Amendments were made regarding the promotion of terrorism. Section 83.221 of the Criminal Code pertains to advocating or promoting the commission of terrorism offences. The Liberals changed the wording of that section with regard to unidentified terrorist offences, for example, ISIS videos on YouTube. They therefore created section 83.221.

That changes the recognizance orders for terrorism and makes it more difficult to control threats. Now, rather than saying "likely", it says "is necessary". Those are just two little words, but they make all the difference. Before, if it was likely that something would happen, our security agencies could intervene, whereas now, intervention must be necessary. It is a technicality, but we cannot support Bill C-59 because of that change in wording. This bill makes it harder for security agencies and police to do their work, when it should be making it easier for them.

We are not opposed to revising our national security legislation. All governments must be prepared to do that to adapt. Bill C-51, which was introduced at the time by the Conservatives, was an essential tool in the fight against terrorist attacks in Canada and the world. We needed tools to help our agents. The Liberals alluded to BillC-51 during the election campaign and claimed that it violated Canadians' freedoms and that it did not make sense. They promised to introduce a new bill and here it is before us today, Bill C-59.

I would say that Bill C-59, a massive omnibus bill, is ultimately not much different from Bill C-51. There are a number of parts I did not mention, because we have nothing to say and we agree with their content. We are not against everything. What we want, no matter the party, is to be effective and to keep Canadians safe. We agree on that.

Nevertheless, some parts are problematic. As I said earlier, the government does not want to accept information from certain countries on potential attacks, because this information could have been obtained through torture. This would be inadmissible. Furthermore, the government is changing two words, which makes it harder to access the information needed to take action. We cannot agree with this.

•(1105)

Now the opposite is being done, and most of the witnesses who came to see us in committee, people in the business of privacy, did not really raise any issues. They did not show up and slam their fists on the desk saying that it was senseless and had to be changed. Everyone had their views to express, but ultimately, there were not that many problems. Some of the witnesses said that Bill C-59 made no sense, but upon questioning them further, we often reached a compromise and everyone agreed that security is important.

Regardless, the Liberals rejected all of the Conservatives' proposed amendments. I find that hard to understand because the minister asked us to do something, he asked us to improve Bill C-59 before bringing it back here for second reading—it is then going to go to third reading. We did the work. We did what we were supposed to do, as did the NDP, as did the Green Party. The Green Party leader had 45 amendments and is to be commended for that. I did not agree with all her amendments, but we all worked to improve Bill C-59, and in turn, to enhance security in Canadians' best interest, as promised. Unfortunately, that never happened. We will have to vote against this bill.

Since I have some time left, I will give you some quotes from witnesses who appeared before the committee. For example, everyone knows Richard Fadden, the Prime Minister's former national security adviser. Mr. Fadden said that Bill C-59 was "beginning to rival the Income Tax Act for complexity. There are sub-sub-subsections that are excluded, that are exempted. If there is anything the committee can do to make it a bit more straightforward", it would help. Mr. Fadden said that to the committee. If anyone knows security, it is Canada's former national security adviser. He said that he could not understand Bill C-59 at all and that it was worse than the Income Tax Act. That is what he told the committee. We agreed and tried to help, but to no avail. It seems like the Liberals were not at the same meeting I was at.

We then saw the example of a young man who goes by the name Abu Huzaifa. Everyone knows that two or three weeks ago, in Toronto, this young man boasted to the *New York Times* and then to CBC that he had fought as a terrorist for Daesh in Iraq and Syria. He admitted that he had travelled there for the purposes of terrorism and had committed atrocities that are not fit to be spoken of here. However, our intelligence officers only found out that this individual is currently roaming free in Toronto from a *New York Times* podcast. Here, we can see the limitations of Bill C-59 in the specific case of a Canadian citizen who decided to fight against us, to go participate in terrorism, to kill people the Islamic State way—everyone here knows what I mean—and then to come back here, free as a bird. Now the Liberals claim that the law does not allow such and such a thing. When we tabled Bill C-51, we were told that it was too restrictive, but now Bill C-59 is making it even harder to get information.

What do Canadians think of that? Canadians are sitting at home, watching the news, and they are thinking that something must be done. They are wondering what exactly we MPs in Ottawa are being paid for. We often see people on Facebook or Twitter asking us to do something, since that is what we are paid for. We in the Conservative Party agree, and we are trying; the government, not so much. Liberal members are hanging their heads and waiting for it to pass. That is not how it works. They need to take security a little more seriously.

This is precisely why Canadians have been losing confidence in their public institutions and their politicians. This is also why some people eventually decide to take their safety into their own hands, but that should never happen. I agree that that must not happen. That would be very dangerous for a society. When people lose confidence in their politicians and take their safety into their own hands, we have the wild west. We do not want that. We therefore need to give our security officers, our intelligence officers, the powerful tools they need to do their jobs properly, not handcuff them. Handcuffs belong on terrorists, not on our officers on the ground.

•(1110)

Christian Leuprecht from Queen's University Royal Military College said that he respected the suggestion that CSIS should stick to its knitting, or in other words, not intervene. In his view, the RCMP should take care of some things, such as disruption. However, he also indicated that the RCMP is struggling on so many fronts already that we need to figure out where the relative advantage of different organizations lies and allow them to quickly implement this.

The questions that were asked following the testimony focused on the fact that the bill takes away our intelligence officers' ability to take action and asks the RCMP to take on that responsibility in CSIS's place, even though the RCMP is already overstretched. We only have to look at what is happening at the border. We have to send RCMP officers to strengthen border security because the government told people to come here. The RCMP is overstretched and now the government is asking it to do things that it is telling CSIS not to do. Meanwhile, western Canada is struggling with a crime wave. My colleagues from Alberta spoke about major crimes being committed in rural communities.

Finland and other European countries have said that terrorism is too important an issue and so they are going to allow their security agencies to take action. We cannot expect the RCMP to deal with everything. That is impossible. At some point, the government needs to take this more seriously.

After hearing from witnesses, we proposed amendments to improve Bill C-59, so that we would no longer have any reason to oppose it at second reading. The government could have listened to reason and accepted our amendments, and then we would have voted in favour of the bill. However, that is not what happened, and in my opinion it was because of pure partisanship. When we are asked to look at a bill before second or third reading and then the government rejects all of our proposals, it is either for ideological reasons or out of partisanship. In any case, I think it is shameful, because this is a matter of public safety and security.

When I first joined the Canadian Armed Forces, in the late 1980s, we were told that the military did not deal with terrorism, that that was the Americans' purview. That was the first thing we were told. At the time, we were learning how to deal with the Warsaw Pact. The wars were highly mechanized and we were not at all involved in fighting terrorism.

However, times have changed. Clearly, everything changed on September 11, 2001. Canada now has special forces, which did not exist back then. JTF2, a special forces unit, was created. Canada has had to adapt to the new world order because it could also be a target for terrorist attacks. We have to take off our blinders and stop thinking that Canada is on another planet, isolated from any form of wickedness and cruelty. Canada is on planet Earth and terrorism knows no borders.

The G7 summit, which will soon be underway, could already be the target of a planned attack. We do not know. If we do not have tools to prevent and intercept threats, what will happen? That is what is important. At present, at the G7, there are Americans and helicopters everywhere. As we can see on the news, U.S. security is omnipresent. Why are there so many of them there? It is because confidence is running low. If Americans are not confident about Canadians' rules, military, and ability to intervene, they will bring everything they need to protect themselves.

That is why we need to take a position of strength. Yes, of course we have to show that we are an open and compassionate country, but we still need to be realistic. We have to be on the lookout and ready to take action.

● (1115)

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

He said that we should condemn torture, but then he said that we should use information obtained by torture. That is shocking. Could he clarify that? If he is against torture, then he must necessarily be against using information obtained by torture.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I must admit that is a very sensitive point. I agree. I never said that I was in favour of torture. On the contrary, we are fully against the use of torture. However, it is important to understand that when we get information from another country and not from one of our agencies it is harder to know how it was obtained. What we are saying is that if this information warns us that there will be an attack in a week or two, we will take that information and prevent such an attack to protect our citizens. Then we can talk to that country and pursue a remedy, making it clear that torture is unacceptable. However, I cannot turn down information from a foreign country when Canadians might be at risk. I cannot say that I will not accept that information.

Mr. Marco Mendicino: That is a slippery slope.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: I know it is, but then when will the government talk to China and Iran and tell them to do something about their human rights record? It is the same thing.

We are not advocating the use of torture. However, if it turns out that information that could help save Canadians was regrettably obtained through torture in another country, we will save Canadians and then address the situation. I realize this is a delicate situation, but I would never let Canadians die by refusing to take information.

● (1120)

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge that I also spend time with the member on the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. What we have learned quite a bit about in that role are the difficulties and complexities around terrorism and the issue of people becoming radicalized. We understand that it is a complex issue that we must deal with very carefully.

However, what I really want to talk about is the fact that when I was knocking on doors when I was campaigning, people across Canada were disheartened about Bill C-51. It absolutely put people who wanted to speak about issues they felt were really important at so much risk.

I am just wondering how we can reconcile the reality of making sure that we look after the security of this country with making sure that people have the right to speak up on issues that matter to them in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

We did indeed take several trips together for NATO meetings. During these trips, we learned that the 27 other member countries have the same kinds of concerns and that terrorism is a serious problem.

I spoke about Bill C-51 a bit in my speech. I know there was talk about how Bill C-51 is an attack on privacy rights. During the 2015 campaign, the Liberals and New Democrats made a lot of speeches against Bill C-51.

This is why the Liberals introduced Bill C-59, but at the end of the day, it is not much different from Bill C-51. The parts that were changed, as I mentioned, are the parts essential to obtaining strategic information against terrorism. At the end of the day, my colleague must not be happy with Bill C-59. I think the bill is acceptable, but it also lacks some fundamental elements.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by my colleague across the floor in relation to this particular debate, but I took particular exception when he made reference to the Liberals using Bill C-51 as a political tool in the last election. The reality of the situation was that the Conservatives brought forward that piece of legislation in a timely manner to specifically start pitting Canadians against each other, driving division among Canadians. Liberals actually took a very difficult position, a position that said, "Yes, we need to give the resources and tools necessary, but at the same time, we need to protect Canadians' rights." It was a position that was very difficult to explain and to take politically.

I take great exception to the fact that the member made that particular comment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, perhaps my colleague from Kingston should talk to his Prime Minister, who, as the leader of the second opposition party, voted in favour of Bill C-51. We must never forget that intervention is required in some situations.

At the time, the Conservative government had to enact legislation quickly to make tools available to our law enforcement agencies. Let us not forget that when intervention is needed, as it is at the border these days, action must be taken. The problem has been going on for a year and a half, but the government is not doing anything. Put us in power, and we will fix the problem.

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague gave a very balanced speech. He totally understands the issues. The hypocrisy from the member from Kingston is unbelievable. His leader supported Bill C-51, and now they all try to pretend it never happened, which is not the case.

I would like to talk about pre-emptive detention. It is a preventative arrest tool in the Criminal Code that enables police to arrest a suspect without a warrant so long as the arresting officer believes an arrest would be crucial in preventing a terrorist act, and the case would be presented before a judge immediately. We are all well aware of the case of Aaron Driver, on August 10, 2016, in Strathroy, Ontario. With this tool, police were able to move quickly and prevent Driver's attempt to detonate explosives in public spaces.

If this legislation had been in place in 2014, we all know that Corporal Cirillo would still be alive as would Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent from Quebec. I would like the member to comment on that and the damage that has been done, or at least the limits that would be put on police, with this being removed in Bill C-59.

● (1125)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

My colleague's question is about the main purpose of Bill C-59, which is to keep Canadians safe. When our security agencies are limited in what they can do, that can compromise Canadians' safety. I do not want to be accused of fearmongering and divisiveness, but that is just the reality of the situation.

The Conservatives' 26th amendment to Bill C-59 would have replaced those two little words, "is likely", with "is necessary". That changes everything. That is the kind of change that makes a difference because it gives our officers the mandate to intervene and keep people from dying.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

I would like him to compare Bill C-51, which has been abundantly criticized, with Bill C-59 before us today. Obviously, we are all in favour of protecting our fellow Canadians, but we are facing a relatively new threat, since many terrorist attacks are not planned, controlled and ordered by a terrorist organization, but are rather thought up and carried out by a radicalized individual.

What was set out in Bill C-51 to help fight radicalization, and what is now set out in Bill C-59 to remedy the same problem, which is getting worse?

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his very good question.

Once again, we are dealing with the complex issue of threat management. In Canada, there are groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS that announce their demands; we can intercept communications and prevent attacks. However, there are also people who become radicalized at home in their basement. Bill C-59 includes no mechanisms to prevent this type of situation.

That is why we want to be able to question people suspected of plotting an attack based on information they might have sent or looked up, and make a preventive arrest if necessary. If there is no problem, so much the better, and if there is one, we could save lives.

[*English*]

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise to speak to Bill C-59, which has been led by the Minister of Public Safety.

As has been stated on many occasions, the objectives of the bill truly represent historic reform in the area of public safety and national security. They include fixing many of the problematic elements under the former Bill C-51, which had been debated quite extensively in the chamber; making significant leaps forward with respect to accountability for our national security and intelligence agencies; bringing Canada's national security framework into the 21st century so our security agencies can keep pace with the state of evolving threats; and ensuring the communications security establishment has the tools it needs to protect Canadians and Canadian interests in cyberspace.

Before I move into the substance of my remarks, the bill has received wide praise by academics and stakeholders across the continuum for the way in which it strikes the balance between ensuring that the rights of Canadians are protected under the charter, while at the same time making quantum leaps to protect our national security and sovereignty.

Today I will focus my remarks on the component of Bill C-59, which would make certain amendments to the Criminal Code and, in particular, with regard to some of the amendments that Bill C-59 would usher in as it relates to terrorist listings.

An entity listed under the Criminal Code falls under the definition of a terrorist group. "Entity" is a term that is broadly defined in the Criminal Code, and includes a person. Any property the entity has in Canada is immediately frozen and may be seized by and forfeited to the government. To date, more than 50 terrorist entities have been listed under the Criminal Code.

I will briefly outline the current listing process in the Criminal Code in order to set the stage for the amendments proposed by Bill C-59.

In order for an entity to be listed under the Criminal Code, first, the Minister of Public Safety must have reasonable grounds to believe that either (a) the entity has knowingly carried out, attempted to carry out, participated in, or facilitated a terrorist activity; or (b) the entity is knowingly acting on behalf of, at the direction of, or in association with such an entity. The Minister of Public Safety, upon forming such a reasonable belief, then makes a recommendation to the Governor in Council that the entity be listed.

The Governor in Council makes the ultimate decision to list, applying the same criteria which is used by the Minister of Public Safety. Once an entity is listed, it may apply to the Minister of Public Safety to be de-listed. If the minister does not make a decision on whether to de-list within 60 days after the receipt of the application, the minister is deemed to recommend that the entity remain a listed entity. The entity may seek judicial review of that decision.

In addition, two years after the establishment of the list of terrorist entities, and every two years thereafter, the Minister of Public Safety must review the list to determine whether there are still reasonable grounds for the entity to be listed as an entity. This review must be completed 120 days after it begins. The minister must publish in the *Canada Gazette*, without delay, a notice that the review has been completed.

Compared to other issues examined in the public consultation on national security areas, this one generated less feedback. Online responses were roughly evenly divided between those who thought the current listing methods met Canada's domestic needs and international obligations and those who thought they did not. However, Bill C-59 proposes changes to various aspects of the listing regime that are meant to increase efficiency, including substantive changes to the two-year review process.

I will first address the substantial changes that Bill C-59 proposes to the two-year review process.

Reviewing all of the entities on the list at the same time every two years is an onerous process. As more entities are added to the list, the greater the burden placed on the government to complete the review within the required time period. Bill C-59 proposes to alleviate some of this burden in two ways. First, it proposes to extend the review period from two years to a maximum of five years. Second, it proposes that instead of reviewing the entire list all at once, the listing of each entity would be reviewed on a staggered basis.

•(1130)

For example, Bill C-59 proposes that when a new entity is listed, the entity would have to be reviewed within five years from the date that it was first listed and within every five years thereafter. This kind of flexibility would also be built into the time frame as to when the notice of the review of the entity would be published.

Other proposed amendments focus on applications to delist. Ensuring that all delisting applications are dealt with in a procedurally fair manner requires engagement with the applicant prior to the minister making a decision. This includes providing the applicant with the opportunity to review and to respond to much of the material that will be put before the minister.

This engagement with the applicant can take time. Therefore, Bill C-59 proposes to extend the 60-day deadline within which the Minister of Public Safety must make a decision to delist to 90 days, or longer if agreed to in writing by both the minister and the applicant.

Another proposal is to amend Bill C-59 to ensure that where an entity has applied to the Minister of Public Safety to be delisted and the minister decides not to delist, then the minister's decision need not be further approved by the Governor in Council. In such a case, because the entity has already been initially listed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the minister, the minister will be confirming that the test for listing the entity continues to be met. However, if the minister does decide to delist the entity, then the final decision on the matter on behalf of the government will rest with the Governor in Council.

Bill C-59 also proposes a change in relation to changing the name or adding aliases of a listed entity. If a listed entity changes its name or begins to operate under a different alias, the current listing process requires that the Minister of Public Safety seek the approval of the Governor in Council to add the new name or alias to the list of terrorist entities. The delays inherent in this process can negatively impact the government's ability to freeze the property of terrorist groups in a timely manner, thereby preventing our capacity to reduce threats to our national security.

It is therefore proposed to allow the Minister of Public Safety to be granted the authority, by regulation, to modify the primary names of already listed terrorist entities and to add and remove aliases of entities already on the list. Similar changes have been made by the United Kingdom and Australia to their listing processes.

Another proposed amendment seeks to make a change to the verb tense in one of the thresholds for listing. The second threshold for listing, which is found in paragraph 83.05(1)(b) of the Criminal Code, requires reasonable grounds to believe the entity is knowingly acting on behalf of, at the direction of, or in association with a terrorist entity. In other words, it is phrased in the present tense.

Entities listed under this threshold whose property has been frozen following their original listing may, after two or more years, no longer be able to act on behalf of a terrorist entity as a result of their property having been frozen. Therefore, even if an entity still has the desire to support a listed terrorist entity that has carried out or facilitated terrorist activity, it can be argued that the current present tense test is no longer met. Bill CC-59's proposal to change this threshold to the past tense will resolve the problem.

Finally, the mistaken identity provision, which exists in the law now, was intended to be used by entities that might reasonably be mistaken for a listed entity because of having the same or a similar name. However, the current provision can be read as permitting any entity to make a request for a certificate confirming that it is not a listed entity, even if its name is not remotely similar to any entities on the list.

The proposed legislation will clarify that a certificate can only be issued for reasonable cases of mistaken identity; that is, where the name is the same as or similar to that of the listed entity.

The listing of terrorist entities is a tool that has been used by Canada, the United Nations, and other countries in our fight against global terrorism. Improving the efficiency of such a regime, as I have outlined in these amendments, while keeping it fair, can only enhance the safety and security of all Canadians.

I hasten to add that it is one of the many measures which are included as part of Bill C-59, which I said at the outset of my remarks, have been the focus of extensive consultations, have been the focus of extensive study by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, have been the focus of extensive debate in the chamber, and have received the wide critical praise of many individuals in academia, and stakeholders.

We have good evidence-based, principled legislation in Bill C-59, and we look forward to its passage in the House.

• (1135)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am obviously going to disagree with the hon. member. I especially disagree with his point that there has been a lot of debate in this chamber. That is not true. On May 28, we had one day of debate. This bill was reported back to us from the committee only on May 3, and yesterday the government moved time allocation on it once again, so there has not been a lot of debate. Any type of public consultation outside the House is not a substitute for debate in this chamber. We should be debating it here, to give an opportunity to members of Parliament to speak to it.

I want to ask the member about the Criminal Code provisions that are being amended by the government in Bill C-59, specifically the ones about the counselling commission of terrorism offence and the way terrorist propaganda is defined. Some of the platforms being used right now to spread terrorist propaganda are YouTube, Facebook, and a lot of other ones, including parts of the dark web. I am deeply concerned that these provisions will actually not cover them because they are often not specific enough in how they speak about Canada. The Islamic terrorists, specifically the radicals, use wording such as "western infidels", which includes Canada and many of our partner nations. They target us by using very bland language, but they may be here in Canada counselling others to take radical or violent actions against Canadians.

Does the member not believe that the modifications being made by the government, as proposed in this piece of legislation, will not cover the use of YouTube and other social media in the spread of terrorist propaganda?

• (1140)

Mr. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, I respectfully disagree with my colleague. One has to look very closely at the definitions of terrorist activity to see that they are sufficiently broad to capture the kind of mischief and unsanctionable expression that he is worried about.

If there is one thing I do agree with in his question, it is that we do need to be taking a closer look at social media and the various platforms that have evolved over the last number of years. It is for that reason that I encourage him, when budget 2018 comes back to the House, to support that budget, which includes additional investments and resources going to our public safety and national security apparatus so we can identify that type of expression, which is not sanctioned under the charter and should indeed be investigated by public safety, national security, and law enforcement actors so that we can root it out and prevent that kind of terrorist activity.

Bill C-59 strikes the right balance, protecting free speech while appropriately identifying speech that would cross over into terrorist activity.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was in the House in the last Parliament when the Conservative government brought in Bill C-51, which contained a number of provisions that were direct infringements on Canadian civil liberties and privacy rights. I was also in the House when the Liberals shamefully voted in favour of that bill. That bill did not strike the right balance, as was admitted by my hon. colleague when he said that Bill C-59 does strike the right balance. It is quite ironic that the Liberals stand here today acknowledging that Bill C-51 violated Canadians' rights but they voted for it.

The New Democrats, when presented with legislation in the House that violates Canadians' privacy, civil liberties, and human rights, stand up against it. We stood up against it in the last Parliament, and we are standing up against it now, with Bill C-59.

The New Democrats have at least four major concerns with this bill. First, there is nothing in this bill that repeals and replaces the current ministerial directive on torture, to ensure that Canada has an absolute prohibition on torture or using information gleaned from it. Second, we want to make sure that the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians has full access to classified information and oversight power. Third, we want to make sure that no warrant issued by CSIS will authorize a breach of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Finally, we want to make sure that this bill enshrines the bulk collection by CSIS of metadata containing private information on Canadians as not relevant to investigations.

I wonder if my hon. colleague can address any or all of those four points of concern by the New Democrats.

Mr. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, let me begin by assuring my hon. colleague that the Minister of Public Safety has said on numerous occasions that at no time will any government actor operating within public safety or national security, in those spheres, be authorized to undertake any action that would run afoul of the charter. That assurance is firm. It is solid. It is consistent, because we place the charter at the pinnacle of every single action we take when it comes to defending the sovereignty of this country.

With regard to the many other questions the member raised, I will just touch on two. I am proud to say that this government was the first ever to introduce legislation to create a national security committee of parliamentarians. For many years, this had been called for, and we were the government to take historic action. That committee is now up and running. It is being chaired by the hon. member for Ottawa South, who is doing a great job.

As a result of that, we are enhancing accountability and transparency when it comes to the kind of oversight that is necessary, so that when government actors are taking measures to protect our national security, they are doing so in a way that strikes a balance between protecting individuals' rights under the charter and protecting all Canadians.

● (1145)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak to a very important bill, Bill C-59, dealing with what really is the first responsibility of government, to attend to the security needs of Canadians. Sometimes we have an instinct of taking our security for granted in this country. We are blessed to have a strong security apparatus of committed professionals around us. On a daily basis, they are dealing with threats that those of us who are civilians or regular people do not see and do not have to know about. However, when we debate matters like this, we should be sensitive to the reality of the security threats we face and the need to always preserve the strong security infrastructure that protects us. The absence of direct experience with security threats should not lead individuals to think they do not exist.

I had a meeting recently with people from the Yazidi community, and they shared an experience with me. A person from their community who was a victim of Daesh had sought refuge here in Canada, and that person actually encountered and recognized someone from Daesh, here in Canada. Members know that there are returning fighters from Daesh, but the image of someone coming to Canada to seek refuge, as many people do, coming to Canada to escape persecution of different kinds, and then coming face to face in this country with the persecutor is something that should give members great pause as we think about the steps we take to ensure our security. We need to make sure that Canada is indeed a place where we are safe and where those coming here as refugees and immigrants know they can be safe as well, that they are getting away from their persecutors and will not encounter those same people here in our country.

Therefore, we need to be diligent about this. When the opposition raises questions about how the government is taking care of our security, let us be clear that it is about the need for the government to do its fundamental job. Sometimes we hear the challenge back from the government that this is somehow about creating fear. It is not. It is about ensuring our security. That is why we ask tough questions and challenge government legislation in cases where it fails.

Bill C-59 makes changes with respect to the framework around national security and makes some rule changes that those of us in the opposition are quite concerned about. First is the issue of communication between departments. People would have a reasonable expectation that different departments of government would work together and collaboratively share information. If protecting the security of Canadians is the primary, fundamental job of the government, then surely government departments should be working together. Often, on a range of different files, we hear the government talk about a whole-of-government approach. It seems to be approaching the level of one of its favourite buzzwords or phrases. Security seems the most obvious area where we would have a whole-of-government approach. We know that the inquiry into the Air India bombing, a terrible act of terrorism where many people lost their lives, determined that this evil act was preventable, but there was an issue of one agency keeping information from another.

Certainly, when we see these kinds of things happening, we have to ensure that provisions are in place for the appropriate sharing of information, and yet the bill limits the ability of government departments to share data among themselves that could protect our national security. If the government already has data that could be used to prevent acts of terrorism or violence on Canadian soil, it is not only legitimate but important that we establish a framework whereby different government departments can share information with one another. That is certainly a concern that we have with this legislation.

● (1150)

Another concern we have is that Bill C-59 would remove the offence of advocating and promoting terrorism and change it to counselling terrorism, which has a narrower sense, rather than the more general offence of advocating and promoting terrorism. On this side of the House, we feel that it should be fairly clear-cut that advocating and promoting terrorism, even if that falls short of directly counselling someone to commit an act of terrorism, should not be allowed. If somebody or some entity promotes acts of terrorism or violence against civilians to disrupt the political order and create terror, we think that this clearly goes beyond the bounds of freedom of speech and there is a legitimate role for the government to stop that.

Recognizing the threats that we face and the need to protect Canadians, and the fact that this is the primary job of the government, it is hard for me to understand why the Liberals would amend the legislation to dial back that wording. This is another concern we have raised and will continue to raise with respect to Bill C-59.

The legislation would also make it more difficult to undertake preventative arrest, in other words for the police to take action that would prevent a terrorist attack. In the previous legislation, the standard was that the intervention be "likely" to prevent a terrorist attack, and now that would be changed to refer to whether the intervention is "necessary" to prevent a terrorist attack. That is a higher bar. We all agree in the House that if it is necessary to arrest someone to prevent a terrorist attack, that arrest should take place. However, I think most Canadians would say that if somebody is in the process of planning or preparing to commit a terrorist attack and the assessment is made that arresting that person in a preventative way is likely to prevent a terrorist attack, it is reasonable for law enforcement to intervene and undertake the arrest at that point.

We are talking about very serious issues where there is the possibility of significant loss of life here in Canada. I referred to Air India, and there are other cases where Canadians have lost their lives as a result of terrorist attacks. There was the shooting at the mosque in Quebec City, which happened during the life of this Parliament, as well as other incidents that some people would define as terrorism, depending on the qualification.

The tools that law enforcement has in place and the ability of law enforcement to share information among different entities, to undertake preventative arrest, and to prosecute somebody who, though not having committed an act of terrorism, is involved in the promotion of terrorist acts, are likely to have a real, concrete impact in terms of whether these types of events will occur in the future.

I also do not think that these standards in any way threaten people's fundamental rights and freedoms. It is the idea that government departments should be able to share information, that people cannot actively promote terrorism, and that somebody who is likely to be prevented from a terrorist action by being arrested should be arrested. I do not think law enforcement intervention in these already relatively extreme cases is in any way a violation of people's fundamental rights and freedoms.

● (1155)

We need to have a commitment to preserving both our security and our freedom. We in the opposition believe that we can do both. However, the government is taking away important and useful tools that should be available in the pursuit of the safety and security of Canadians, which, as I have said before, is the primary job of government.

On that basis, we were concerned and proposed a number of amendments at committee, which unfortunately were not adopted. Therefore, at this stage, we are going to be opposing Bill C-59.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, I was able to participate in hearing expert witnesses and studying this bill at first reading, which is an unusual thing to be able to do. It gave us a great opportunity to review this legislation.

One thing most clearly addressed the issues raised by my constituents when I talked to them about the previous incarnation of the legislation brought forth by the previous Conservative government. It had to do with the lack of oversight. They felt there was no transparency in the way the legislation had been set out in the previous framework.

I would like to ask my friend this. Does he not see tremendous improvements in this legislation, due to the fact that we have multiple layers of very well-thought-out, transparent ways of having oversight and review of decisions made by our national security agencies?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, my colleague does a disservice to the systems of oversight that have long existed in this country and have generally been very effective. Through this legislation, the government proposes to make some changes to that structure through its new national security and intelligence review agency. I would point out that in proposing this new administrative mechanism for oversight, the government has not been able to present to Parliament the projected administrative costs associated with the reporting under this system.

Our concern is this. When it comes to national security, we are not seeing increases in funding from the government, yet we are seeing the adding on of administrative burdens. We are concerned that resources will be taken away from other aspects of defending our security. Obviously, we all agree in this House that oversight mechanisms are important. This bill proposes a different one from the ones that have existed in the past under successive governments. However, the government is not discussing or revealing the costs of those, nor is it providing new funding for them. That should really raise some red flags for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

I must say that, since we began debating Bill C-59, I have had a hard time getting a handle on the Conservatives' position on several issues, in particular on the issue of torture.

The New Democrats are resolutely against the use of torture to obtain information, not only because it is inhumane, but also because history has shown time and time again that information obtained by torture is rarely reliable and often totally untrue. Earlier I heard some of his colleagues say that the Conservatives are also against torture, which I am happy to hear. However, they are prepared to use information from other countries that may have been obtained through torture.

Is the Conservatives' approach really to do indirectly what they refuse to do directly?

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. My party and I are very much opposed to torture. We go further than that. We take a very strong line against other countries in challenging them on human rights abuses, to a degree that I do not think we see from the current government.

For example, let me take this opportunity to shamelessly plug my own private member's bill, Bill C-350. It would, for the first time, make it a criminal offence for a Canadian to receive an organ that has been harvested from a person without his or her consent. A similar bill, Bill S-240, is working its way through the Senate and will likely come to this chamber before my private member's bill.

I suspect that my friends in the NDP will have no problem supporting either of those bills, but we have yet to hear from the government as to where it stands on this. Therefore, there are many issues around torture and fundamental human rights where we need to see some progress. I hope we will see support on those pieces of legislation dealing with organ harvesting, which is a form of torture.

The government has not yet signalled one way or the other how it is going to vote, which is interesting. It should be an easy, clear-cut issue. However, sometimes the things we think are easy and clear-cut do not seem as clear-cut from that side. Nonetheless, I am hopeful there is a consensus here that torture is totally unacceptable, and that we need to take the steps we can to address it.

● (1200)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and speak to such an important piece of legislation. I do not say that lightly. While we were in opposition, Stephen Harper and the government of the day brought in Bill C-51. Many Canadians will remember Bill C-51, which had very serious issues. I appreciate the comments coming from the New Democrats with respect to Bill C-51. Like many of them, I too was here, and I listened very closely to what was being debated.

The biggest difference between us and the New Democrats is that we understand very clearly that we have to ensure Canadians are safe while at the same time protecting our rights and freedoms. As such, when we assessed Bill C-51, we made a commitment to Canadians to address the major flaws in the bill. At a standing committee on security, which was made up of parliamentarians, I can recall our proposing ways to address the whole issue and concerns about the potential invasion of rights and freedoms. It went into committee, and it was a really long debate. We spent many hours, both in the chamber and at committee, discussing the pros and cons of Bill C-51.

What came out of it for us as the Liberal Party back in 2015 was that we made a commitment to Canadians. We said we would support Bill C-51, but that if we were to form government we would make substantial changes to it.

That is why it is such a pleasure for me to stand in the House today. Looking at Bill C-59, I would like to tell the constituents I represent that the Prime Minister has kept yet another very important promise made to Canadians in the last election.

We talk a lot about Canada's middle class, those striving to be a part of it, and how this government is so focused on improving conditions for our middle class. One could ultimately argue that the issue of safety and rights is very important to the middle class, but for me, this particular issue is all about righting a wrong from the past government and advancing the whole issue of safety, security, freedoms, and rights.

I believe it is the first time we have been able to deal with that. Through a parliamentary committee, we had legislation that ultimately put in place a national security body, if I can put it that way, to ensure a high sense of transparency and accountability from within that committee and our security agencies. In fact, prior to this government bringing it in, we were the only country that did not have an oversight parliamentary group to look at all the different aspects of security, rights, and freedoms. We were the only one of the Five Eyes that did not have such a group. New Zealand, Australia, the U.S., and the U.K. all had them.

Today, Canada has that in place. That was a commitment we made and a commitment that was fulfilled. I look at Bill C-59 today, and again it is fulfilling a commitment. The government is, in fact, committed to keeping Canadians safe while safeguarding rights and freedoms.

We listen to some of my colleagues across the way, and we understand the important changes taking place even in our own society, with radicalization through the promotion of social media and the types of things that can easily be downloaded or observed. Many Canadians share our concern and realize that at times there is a need for a government to take action. Bill C-59 does just that.

● (1205)

We have legislation before us that was amended. A number of very positive amendments were brought forward, even some from non-government members, that were ultimately adopted. I see that again as a positive thing.

The previous speaker raised some concerns in terms of communications between departments. I remember talking in opposition about how important it is that our security and public safety agencies and departments have those links that enable the sharing of information, but let us look at the essence of what the Conservatives did. They said these agencies shall share, but there was no real clear definition or outline in terms of how they would share information. That was a concern Canadians had. If we look at Bill C-59, we find more detail and clarity in terms of how that will take place.

Again, this is something that will alleviate a great deal of concern Canadians had in regard to our security agencies. It is a positive step forward. Information disclosure between departments is something that is important. Information should be shared, but there also needs to be a proper establishment of a system that allows a sense of confidence and public trust that rights and freedoms are being respected at the same time.

My colleague across the way talked about how we need to buckle down on the promoting and advocating of terrorism. He seemed to take offence to the fact that we have used the word "counselling" for terrorism versus using words like "promoting" and "advocating". There is no doubt the Conservatives are very good when it comes to spin. They say if it is promoting or advocating terrorism, that is bad, and of course Canadians would agree, but it is those types of words. Now they are offended because we replaced that with "counselling". I believe that counselling will be just as effective, if not more effective, in terms of the long game in trying to prevent these types of actions from taking place. It will be more useful in terms of going into the courts.

There is no doubt that the Conservatives know the types of spin words to use, but I do not believe for a moment that it is more effective than what was put in this legislation. When it comes to rights and freedoms, Canadians are very much aware that it was Pierre Elliott Trudeau who brought in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We are a party of the charter. We understand how important that is.

At the same time, we also understand the need to ensure that there is national safety, and to support our security agencies. It was not this government but the Stephen Harper government that literally cut tens, if not hundreds of millions of dollars out of things such as border controls and supports for our RCMP. This government has recognized that if we are not only going to talk the line, we also have to walk the line and provide the proper resources. We have seen those additional resources in not only our first budget, but also our second budget.

We have ministers such as public safety, immigration and citizenship, and others who are working together on some very important files. When I think of Bill C-59 and the fine work we have done in regard to the establishment of this parliamentary oversight committee, I feel good for the simple reason that we made a commitment to Canadians and the bill is about keeping that commitment. It deals with ensuring and re-establishing public confidence that we are protecting freedoms and rights. At the same time, it ensures that Canada is a safe country and that the terrorist threat is marginalized as much as possible through good, sound legislation. That is what this is.

● (1210)

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to my colleague's speech. One of the things Bill C-59 would do is restate what is already Canadian policy, and that is that we do not torture, and we do not use information that comes from torture.

I want to ask the member a hypothetical question, and that concerns our Five Eyes partners, which are the United Kingdom, the United States, New Zealand, and Australia, with Canada being the fifth. If the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness came into information via one of those Five Eyes partners that, in fact, a terrorist threat to Canadians was imminent, but the minister could not satisfy himself that the information had not come from the use of torture, how would the member respond if he were the minister? What kind of advice would he give the minister? Would he intervene and prevent that terrorist act from taking place, or would he step back and say, "I'm sorry, but I can't", because of this policy Bill C-59 now articulates more accurately?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, my friend across the way talked about the Five Eyes countries. There was a heated debate. I remember it quite well, because I was on the opposition benches. I appealed to government member after government member, asking why they would not recognize the valuable work the Five Eyes countries do. One of the things four of the five have done is establish a parliamentary oversight group that is able to deal with all forms of terrorist threats and potential threats in ways in which issues can be resolved. Time after time, no matter how many times I asked the question or who I was asking, whether it was a minister or a backbencher, not one of them said that we should participate and have parliamentary oversight like the four other countries.

As opposed to answering a hypothetical question, I would encourage my Conservative friends to look at this legislation as legislation that reflects what we believe Canadians want to see, and they should support it, because it is good legislation, just like the legislation that established Canada as one of the five countries that now has an oversight committee. The oversight committee is something I believe would be in a much better position to deal with the issue the member has raised.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, based on my current understanding of Bill C-59, the Liberals want to create a legal framework to authorize the Canadian Security Intelligence Service to store sensitive big data or metadata on completely innocent Canadians, something the Supreme Court has come down on in the past.

As proof, consider the testimony of Daniel Therrien, the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, who said:

> We have seen real cases in which CSIS had in its bank of information the information about many people who did not represent a threat.

I have the same question as the commissioner, who asked the following as part of his testimony: is that the country we want to live in?

● (1215)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the type of society I would like to live in is one in which we have a security parliamentary group that can actually sit down and review actual issues, such as what the member has brought forward. If that security group, which has representation from all political parties, makes a determination and comes up with recommendations after talking with the different security and public safety agencies and departments and is able to resolve something in a positive fashion, I am all for it.

I am also very supportive, as I indicated in my comments, of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I believe that this security agency of parliamentarians is also very supportive of that.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill C-59. Listening to our Liberal friends across the way, one would assume that this is all about public safety, that Bill C-59 would improve public safety and the ability of our security agencies to intervene if a terrorist threat presented itself. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Let us go back and understand what this Prime Minister did in the last election. Whether it was his youth, or ignorance, he went out there and said that he was going to undo every single bit of the Stephen Harper legacy, a legacy I am very proud of, by the way. That was his goal.

One of the things he was going to undo was what Bill C-51 did. Bill C-51 was a bill our previous Conservative government brought forward to reform and modernize how we approach terrorist threats in Canada. We wanted to provide our government security agencies with the ability to effectively, and in a timely way, intervene when necessary to protect Canadians against terrorist threats. Bill C-51 was actually very well received across the country. Our security agencies welcomed it as providing them with additional tools.

I just heard my Liberal colleagues chuckle and heckle. Did members know that the Liberals, in the previous Parliament, actually supported Bill C-51? Here they stand saying that somehow that legislation did not do what it was intended to do. In fact, it did. It made Canadians much safer and allowed our security agencies to intervene in a timely way to protect Canadians. This bill that has come forward would do nothing of the sort.

The committee overseeing this bill had 16 meetings, and at the end of the whole process, there were 235 amendments brought forward. That is how bad this legislation was. Forty-three of those amendments came from Liberals themselves. They rushed forward this legislation, doing what Liberals do best: posture publicly, rush through legislation, and then realize, "What have we done? My goodness." They had 43 amendments of their own, all of which passed, of course. There were 20-some Conservative amendments, and none of them passed, even though they were intelligently laid-out improvements to this legislation. That is the kind of government we are dealing with here. It was all about optics so that the government would be able to say, "We are taking that old Bill C-51 that was not worth anything, although we voted in favour of it, and we are going to replace it with our own legislation." The reality is that Bill C-51 was a significant step forward in protecting Canadians.

This legislation is quite different. What it would do is take one agency and replace it with another. That is what Liberals do. They take something that is working and replace it with something else that costs a ton of money. In fact, the estimate to implement this bill is $100 million. That is $100 million taxpayers do not have to spend, because the bill would not do one iota to improve the protection of Canadians against terrorist threats. There would be no improved oversight or improved intelligence capabilities.

The bill would do one thing we applaud, which is reaffirm that Canada will not torture. Most Canadians would say that this is something Canada should never do.

The Liberals went further. They ignored warnings from some of our intelligence agencies that the administrative costs were going to get very expensive. In fact, I have a quote here from our former national security adviser, Richard Fadden. Here is what he said about Bill C-59: "It is beginning to rival the Income Tax Act for complexity." Canadians know how complex that act has become.

He said, "There are sub-sub-subsections that are excluded, that are exempted. If there is anything the committee can do to make it a bit more straightforward, [it would be appreciated]". Did the committee, in fact, do that? No, it did not make it more straightforward.

● (1220)

There is the appointment of a new intelligence commissioner, which is, of course, the old one, but again, with additional costs. The bill would establish how a new commissioner would be appointed. What the Liberals would not do is allow current or past judges to fill that role. As members know, retired and current judges are highly skilled in being able to assess evidence in the courtroom. It is a skill that is critical to being a good commissioner who addresses issues of intelligence.

Another shortcoming of Bill C-59 is that there is excessive emphasis on privacy, which would be a significant deterrent to critical interdepartmental information sharing. In other words, this legislation would highlight privacy concerns to the point that our security agencies and all the departments of government would now become hamstrung. Their hands would become tied when it came to sharing information with other departments and our security agencies, which could be critical information in assessing and deterring terrorist threats.

Why would the government do this? The Liberals say that they want to protect Canadians, but the legislation would actually take a step backwards. It would make it even more difficult and would trip up our security agencies as they tried to do the job we have asked them to do, which is protect us. Why are we erring on the side of the terrorists?

We heard testimony, again from Mr. Fadden, that this proposed legislation would establish more silos. They were his nightmare when he was the national security director. We now have evidence from the Air India bombing. The inquiry determined that the tragedy could have been prevented had one agency in government not withheld critical information from our police and security authorities. Instead, 329 people died at the hands of terrorists.

Again, why are we erring on the side of terrorists? This proposed legislation is a step backward. It is not something Canadians expected from a government that had talked about protecting Canadians better.

There are also challenges with the Criminal Code amendments in Bill C-59. The government chose to move away from criminalizing "advocating or promoting terrorism" and would move towards "counselling" terrorism. The wording has been parsed very carefully by security experts, and they have said that this proposed change in the legislation would mean, for example, that ISIS propaganda being spread on YouTube would not be captured and would not be criminalized. Was the intention of the government when it was elected, when it made its promises to protect Canadians, to now step backward, to revise the Criminal Code in a way that would make it less tough on terrorists, those who are promoting terrorism, those who are advocating terrorism, and those who are counselling terrorism? This would be a step backward on that.

In closing, I have already stated that the Liberals are prepared to err on the side of terrorists rather than on the side of Canadian law enforcement and international security teams. The bill would create more bureaucracy, more costs, and less money and security for Canadians.

When I was in cabinet, we took security very seriously. We trusted our national security experts. The proposed legislation is essentially a vote of non-confidence in those experts we have in government to protect us.

● (1225)

Finally, the message we are sending is that red tape is more important than sharing information and stopping terrorism. That is a sad story. We can do better as Canadians.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is really interesting to have a discussion around how we manage freedom and fairness and the rights of Canadians. How do we create the conditions for fairness in the country? How do we help support the middle class and those working hard to join it? How do we give economic fairness to people? How do we make environmental fairness the order of the day? What about gender equity fairness?

As well, there is the question of how we treat people through the fairness of our laws and the administration of our laws. The bill before us seeks to provide that type of fairness by ensuring that the oversight of our laws is not a political process.

It does not sow fear and division. It does not put Canadians against Canadians. It really looks at how we can share information among security agencies and how we can enforce the rule of law without entering into politics of fear and division.

Could the hon. member dive a bit more into the politics of fear and division that the previous government was so good at?

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the premise of the question. The politics of fear and division are coming from members on that side.

When we talk about fear and division, let us talk about terrorism. Terrorism is about fear and division. It is about striking fear into the hearts of citizens in Canada and in fact all people around the world.

The member began his discussion by talking about fairness. We are talking about a bill that is supposed to address terrorism. It is about security. It is not supposed to be about fairness in the first place. Imagine—here we are trying to find a balance of fairness between terrorists and our Canadian citizens.

Canadians who are watching this debate right now have received a very clear message: that when it comes to national security, when it comes to fighting terrorism, those Liberals are way more interested in talking about fairness. We as Conservatives are talking about security and protecting Canadians.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the challenges always is how to make sure we keep things safe and secure for Canadians while respecting their rights as law-abiding citizens. We should always have this kind of important debate in the House, because it really speaks to the core of who we are as Canadians.

I want to quote the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, who said on November 22, 2016:

> Think of the recent judgment by the Federal Court that found that CSIS had unlawfully retained the metadata of a large number of law-abiding individuals who are not threats to national security because CSIS felt it needed to keep that information for analytical purposes.
>
> These are not theoretical risks. These are real things, real concerns. Do we want a country where the security service has a lot of information about most citizens with a view to detecting national security threats? Is that the country we want to live in?

I would like the member to speak to that.

● (1230)

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for her thoughtful question. It is an important one.

Canadians very much value their privacy, and today's use of metadata represents a significant risk to privacy in Canada. I want to assure my colleague that I strongly support efforts to ensure that data, including metadata, that is not critical to protect the national security of our country should be kept private. There are significant challenges to doing that today, especially with the use of social media. It is something that all governments have to take seriously.

That said, at the end of the day, when a bill like Bill C-51 is brought forward—a bill that undermines our national security by making it more difficult for government departments and government agencies to speak to each other to ensure that they have the critical information required to protect Canadians—we have a problem. That is why I am critical of Bill C-59.

Bill C-51 established a very good environment within which our security agencies could do the job Canadians have asked them to do. Again I note that the Liberals who are being critical of that bill today actually voted in favour of it back then.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to speak in support of Bill C-59. It has been very interesting to listen to the speeches, especially the last one, because they really exemplify why people in my community were so concerned about the way the previous government handled our national security issues and framework. It really epitomizes the concerns. Canadians were looking for balance, and that is what we brought back in Bill C-59, rather than fearmongering.

I will read an important quote, based on what we have heard. Professor Kent Roach provided a brief to the committee on November 28, 2017, in which he stated:

> Review and careful deliberation is not the enemy of security.... There are no simple solutions to the real security threats we face. We should be honest with Canadians about this stubborn reality. All of us should strive to avoid reducing complex laws and processes to simplistic slogans. These are difficult issues and they should be debated with care and respect to all sides.

With that in mind, I will speak to this bill.

This important piece of legislation proposes a range of measures that represent a complete and much-needed overhaul of Canada's national security framework. I was proud to sit as a member of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security that reviewed this bill. We heard from expert witnesses and put forward amendments to improve this proposed legislation. The bill was referred to committee at first reading, which increased the scope of our review, and our committee took this responsibility seriously. Taking into account what I said about not taking on a partisan tone, I want to commend all of the members from all parties who served on that committee, and the chair, because we worked very well together on this bill.

There are two aspects of Bill C-59 that are particularly important to me and my community. First, vastly improved and increased oversight mechanisms would be put in place to review the work of our security agencies. The oversight would increase the accountability and transparency of these agencies, and this should give us all great confidence in the framework put forth in this proposed legislation.

The second part of this bill that responds to issues raised by people in my community is the improved framework for the management of the Secure Air Travel Act. In particular, I am talking about concerns raised by parents with children who were subject to false positive name matches on what we call the "no-fly list", as well as adults who were subject to false positive name matches. They came to me with their concerns, and I have been happy to advocate on their behalf.

The introduction of Bill C-59 followed unprecedented public consultations held in person and online. Thousands of Canadians answered the call and shared their thoughts and opinions on a range of topics related to national security. In my community, I hosted a consultation at Jimmy Simpson Community Centre, which was facilitated by my colleague, the member for Oakville North—Burlington. The input from that meeting was provided to the minister as part of the consultation, which led to the tabling of the bill. I really need to emphasize that one of the primary concerns raised by people was a lack of oversight and a need to ensure that charter rights were being respected.

Across the country, not just in my community, tens of thousands of views were heard, collected, documented, and analyzed as part of what our government would put together as a response, and citizens, parliamentarians, community leaders, national security experts, and academics provided valuable input that played an important role in shaping this bill. I would like to commend the study on our national security framework carried out by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, which formed a valuable part of that input. I was not part of the committee when that study was done, but it was a very important background document for the committee as it studied this bill.

Canadians were clear about one thing when they were consulted in 2016: they expected their rights, freedoms, and privacy to be protected at the same time as their security, and that is the balance that I referred to at the outset of my speech. More specifically, Canadians want to protect our freedom of speech, which is a fundamental freedom in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and they want to be protected against unlawful surveillance. I strongly believe that the proposed measures in Bill C-59 would meet those expectations.

● (1235)

Let me begin by speaking about the oversight brought forth in Bill C-59.

The result of the public consultations undertaken in 2016 showed a strong desire from Canadians for increased accountability and more transparency on national security. Also, the weakness of our existing oversight mechanisms had been noted by Justice O'Connor in the Arar commission. One of the commission's conclusions was that the review of our security agencies was stovepiped, meaning that the review was limited to each individual agency and there was no overarching system of review. The commission suggested that there be bridges built between existing review bodies. Getting rid of this stovepiped review is one of the most important aspects of this bill.

Bill C-59 builds upon the first cross-agency layer of oversight, which was adopted by this place with the passing of Bill C-22, which created the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians. The committee has begun its work and is an important means of providing that overarching review.

The legislation we are debating today proposes the creation of a new, comprehensive national security review body, the national security and intelligence review agency, the NSIRA. This new review body would replace the Security Intelligence Review Committee and the Office of the Communications Security Establishment Commissioner. It would also take on the review of the RCMP's national security activities, currently done by the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP.

A significant benefit of the proposed model is that the new review body would be able to review relevant activities across the Government of Canada, rather than just being able to look at one agency. This model recognizes the increasingly interconnected nature of the government's national security and intelligence activities. The new body would ensure that Canada's national security agencies are complying with the law and that their actions are reasonable and necessary. Its findings and recommendations would be provided to relevant ministers through classified reports. It would also produce an unclassified annual report to Parliament summarizing the findings and recommendations made to ministers.

I had the opportunity to ask the Minister of Public Safety and National Security when he appeared at committee about one aspect of the oversight I would like to see added. On this point, I am referring to the review of the Canada Border Services Agency. The minister assured us at committee that this aspect is being worked on by our government, and I will continue to advocate for this important addition.

Before leaving the issue of oversight, I would also like to note that the legislation proposes to create an intelligence commissioner to authorize certain intelligence and cybersecurity activities before they take place. This is an important addition that speaks to many concerns raised by people in my community about wanting proper checks and balances on our security agencies.

Another issue that I mentioned at the outset that was very important to people in my community was the challenges faced by people who have children with a name that creates a false positive when it matches a name that is on the no-fly list. These families are unable to check in for a flight online, which can result in missed flights if a plane is overbooked, but more importantly, these families feel stigmatized and uncomfortable being stopped in the airport for additional screening based on the false positive.

This legislation, along with funding that was made available in the last budget, would change that system. I was pleased to ask the minister when these changes could be put into place. He advised us it would take about three years to make these necessary changes, but it is something that gives hope to many people in my community, and I am happy to see it being done.

These are only a few of the measures in Bill C-59 that show tremendous improvements and respond to the issues raised by people in my community. I am very happy to be here today to speak in favour of the bill.

● (1240)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have so much to say and so little time to say it. I appreciate everybody's view and the comments that have been made. However, I will speak from some experience. I remember where I was on September 11, 2001. As many members know, my previous role was in aviation. I worked with security groups all around the world with respect to protecting our borders. I was involved in inter-agency discussions on how to make our industry, airports, marine ports, transportation systems, and country safe.

We live in a different world. The reality is that people have these flowery views because those who work behind the scenes protect us. There are things that we do not know are going on because those security groups are able to have that information and make those arrests or stop those events from happening before anybody even knows about it.

I listened intently to my hon. colleague from across the way. However, with all due respect, I come at it from a very real and knowledgeable background. We need to give every tool possible to those agencies and groups that have been tasked to protect us. Bill C-59 would not do that. It would take away those tools and would make them work more in silos. Why? I honestly do not understand.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I could not disagree more with what my friend across the way said. I am not presuming that there are no security risks out there. What I am talking about is balance.

We are in a country that respects the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We are in a country that respects privacy. These are important principles. Therefore, yes, we absolutely must defend security, but we must also take into account the fundamental rights that Canadians want to protect.

This does not just come from me. I will quote Professor Forcese, who stated this in *Maclean's*:

> ...changes proposed in C-59 are solid gains—measured both from a rule of law and civil liberties perspective—and come at no credible cost to security. They remove excess that the security services did not need—and has not used—while tying those services into close orbit around a new accountability system....

● (1245)

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I especially appreciate the member's dedication to the no-fly kids and the challenges those families face when they try to travel and having their name screened as being a dangerous one. I cannot imagine walking into an airport and having my three-year old being accused of something as terrible as this.

However, I would like some clarity on is this. An amendment was proposed by the NDP to ensure individuals had access to the existing pool of special advocates so they could defend themselves against secret evidence they did not always have access to, but was being used against them. How does the member square that? Families need to know that. Waiting three years is a long time. Understanding why they are being stopped is really important, as well as having the advocacy and support to move forward. Why did the Liberals not support this amendment?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, the proposed changes to the Security Air Travel Act deal with one of the problems of the existing system right now, and that is the fact that the system is managed by airlines, oddly enough. This brings it back to government so government can handle it responsibly and respond to the questions and concerns people may have. We have all of the overarching layers that are introduced through this legislation to put in the necessary levels of oversight. We have to look at all the different layers that have been put into place. With all of them, people's concerns can be matched.

I appreciate that my friend from across the way understands the concerns of these families.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-59, which relates to issues of national security and how we deal with people suspected of terrorist acts.

[*English*]

This issue is quite different from those usually addressed. Usually, I have to talk about public finance. It is quite easy to say that the Liberals are wrong because they have a deficit and that we are right because we oppose deficits, which is very clear. In that case, this is very touchy. We are talking about so many great issues, and this issue should be addressed without partisanship. For sure, it is not easy.

[*Translation*]

That is why this really should be a non-partisan issue. This will not be easy, because obviously people are sharply divided on how this information should be dealt with in order to stop terrorism and how terrorists should be dealt with.

Bill C-59 is the current government's response to Bill C-51, which our government had passed. I remind the House that the Liberals, who formed the second opposition party at the time, supported Bill C-51, but said that they would change it right away once in power. It was supposedly so urgent, and yet they have been in power for two and a half years now, and it has taken the Liberals this long to bring forward their response to the Conservative Bill C-51 in the House of Commons.

As I was saying earlier, some questions are easier to answer, because they are based not on partisanship, but on your point of view. For example, when it comes to public finances, you can be for or against the deficit. However, no one is arguing against the need to crack down on terrorism. The distinctions are in the nuances.

That is why the opposition parties proposed dozens of amendments to the bill; sadly, however, with the exception of four technical amendments proposed by the NDP, the Liberals systematically rejected all amendments proposed by the Conservative Party and the Green Party, and Lord knows that there is an entire world between the Conservative Party and the Green Party.

This bill is meant to help us tackle the terrorist threat, whether real or potential. In the old days, in World War II, the enemy was easily identified. Speaking of which, yesterday was the 74th anniversary of the Normandy landing, a major turning point in the liberation of the world from Nazi oppression. It was easy to identify the enemy back then. Their flag, leader, uniform and weapons were clearly identifiable. We knew where they were.

The problem with terrorism is that the enemy is everywhere and nowhere. They have no flag. They have a leader, but they may have another one by tomorrow morning. The enemy can be right here or on the other side of the world. Terrorism is an entirely new way of waging war, which calls for an entirely new way of defending ourselves. That is why, in our opinion, we need to share information. All police forces and all intelligence agencies working in this country and around the world must be able to share information in order to prevent tragedies like the one we witnessed on September 11, 2001.

In our opinion, the bill does not go far enough in terms of information sharing, which is necessary if we are to win the fight against terrorism. We believe that the Communications Security Establishment, the RCMP, CSIS and all of the other agencies that fight terrorism every day should join forces. They should share an information pipeline rather than work in silos.

In our opinion, if the bill is passed as it is now, the relevant information that could be used to flush out potential terrorists will not be shared as it should be. We are therefore asking the government to be more flexible in this respect. Unfortunately, the amendments proposed by our shadow cabinet minister, the hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, were rejected.

● (1250)

We are very concerned about another point as well: the charges against suspected terrorists. We believe that the language of the bill will make it more difficult to charge and flush out terrorists. This is a delicate subject, and every word is important.

We believe that the most significant and most contentious change the bill makes to the Criminal Code amends the offence set out in section 83.221, "Advocating or promoting commission of terrorism offences". This is of special interest to us because this offence was created by Bill C-51, which we introduced. Bill C-59 requires a much more stringent test by changing the wording to, "Every person who counsels another person to commit a terrorism offence". The same applies to the definition of terrorist propaganda in subsection 83.222(8), which, in our opinion, will greatly restrict law enforcement agencies' ability to use the tool for dismantling terrorist propaganda with judicial authorization as set out in Bill C-51. Why? Because as it is written, when you talk about counselling another person to commit a terrorism offence, it leaves room for interpretation.

What is the difference between a person and a group of people; between a person and a gathering; between a person and an entity; or between a person and an illicit and illegal group? In our opinion, this is a loophole in the bill. It would have been better to leave it as written in the Conservative Bill C-51. The government decided not to. In our opinion, it made a mistake.

Generally speaking, should we be surprised at the government's attitude toward the fight against terrorism? The following example is unfortunate, but true. We know that 60 Canadians left Canada to join ISIS. Then, they realized that the war was lost because the free and democratic nations of the world decided to join forces and fight back. Now, with ISIS beginning to crumble, these 60 Canadians, cowards at heart, realize that they are going to lose and decide to return to Canada. In our opinion, these people are criminals. They left our country to fight Canadian soldiers defending freedom and democracy and return to Canada as if nothing had happened. No.

Worse still, the Liberal government's attitude toward these Canadian criminals is to offer them poetry lessons. That is a pretty mediocre approach to criminals who left Canada with the mandate to kill Canadian soldiers. We believe that we should throw the book at these people. They need to be dealt with accordingly, and certainly not welcomed home with poetry lessons, as the government proposes.

Time is running out, but I would like to take this opportunity, since we are discussing security, to extend the warmest thanks to all the employees at the RCMP, CSIS, the CSE and other law enforcement agencies such as the Sûreté du Québec in Quebec and municipal police forces. Let us pay tribute to all these people who get up every morning to keep Canadians safe. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the 4,000 or more police officers from across Canada who are working hard in the Charlevoix and Quebec City regions to ensure the safety of the G7 summit, these people who place their life on the line so that we can live in a free and democratic society where we feel safe. I would like to thank these women and men from coast to coast to coast that make it possible for us to be free and, most importantly, to feel safe.

● (1255)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his speech.

[*English*]

I will have to phrase my question in English because I want to be very specific about this. Within this context in particular, we all know that because a single Muslim may be a terrorist does not mean that all Muslims are terrorists. In the same way, we know that a single individual who threatens to kill a member of Parliament does not mean that all members of that person's group are terrorists.

In the context of counselling terrorism or counselling violence, would the member agree that if you encourage organizations and individuals to attack a government, who through their actions specifically say and give their name to it and threaten to kill members of Parliament, which has happened with the emails we have all received in the last few weeks, that the organizations involved are counselling terrorism?

It is true there are gun owners who are threatening to kill members of Parliament and there are members of your party encouraging gun owners. I am not saying that all gun owners are terrorists by any stretch, any more than you are saying that all Muslims are terrorists. However, when we get into a situation of counselling terrorism, if there are gun owners who threaten the lives of MPs, would you not agree that something needs to change in the way conversations about politics, terrorism, and violence happen in this country, and that those activities should not be criminalized, but rather that the political party involved should temper the conversation and bring it back to a real one so that all people are not tarred with the same brush?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I want to remind the hon. members to use the third person and talk through the Speaker. I am sure the hon. member was not referring to my party, because I am neutral. I am the Speaker.

I will pass it on to the hon. member from Louis-Saint-Laurent.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege of representing Canadians, first, in the National Assembly, and now here, in the House of Commons, for almost 10 years now. What a shame it is to hear such an appalling statement from a Liberal MP. This is the second time it has happened, as I was targeted by such a statement a year and a half ago. I had a private discussion with the hon. member who accused me unjustly. Linking gun owners who assault members of parliament to a political party, and then saying that no such link was implied even though the words were said, is neither dignified nor honourable.

I will answer the question directly. If an unscrupulous person threatens to kill someone, it is the duty and responsibility of the police to investigate the situation and put the rogues in jail, where appropriate. In any case, we should not link that person to a group, then another, and another, until we get to a political party, as the hon. member in question did in such appalling fashion.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to know what my hon. colleague thinks about the much-discussed no-fly list and the problems it is causing. Canadian citizens, in particular children, who have the misfortune of having the same name as people on the no-fly list, are currently in a situation where they either cannot fly or risk being denied boarding. They can find themselves in a difficult situation. We asked for emergency measures to deal with this situation, and we are still waiting for the government to do something to remedy the issue of children banned from air travel.

What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

• (1300)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Drummond for his relevant and appropriate question, in contrast to the comment I heard a few minutes ago from the Liberal member from Toronto.

The point the member raised is very important and it touches on what was said earlier about the bill. Unfortunately, our work too often happens in silos. Police forces have to be able to share information. We certainly must not amalgamate information in this situation. Just because you are the brother, neighbour, or cousin of a criminal, it does not in any way mean that you are necessarily a criminal. However, this requires that the authorities have the correct information. Do police forces always have all of the information? Not necessarily. This is why we want to make it so that information can flow, as it would through a pipeline, instead of being stacked up in silos. We think that, in the case the member raised, the more that information can be shared and sent to other police authorities, the more police forces and the appropriate anti-terrorist units will be able to work together, collaborate and share information. This could stop bad decisions from being made.

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker,

[*Member spoke in Cree*]

[*English*]

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to speak to this historic piece of legislation. The people of Winnipeg Centre were very concerned before the last election in 2015 about the manoeuvres of the Harper government with Bill C-51 and all of the things that it did to undermine our national security. We are committed to keeping Canadians safe while safeguarding rights and freedoms. After the largest and most transparent public consultation process on national security in our country's history—there were 58,933 online submissions, 17,862 email submissions, and more than 20 in-person events—I am very proud to see that our government has introduced this national security act in 2017 to undo and repair the damage done by the Harper Conservatives with Bill C-51.

I would like to thank the committee for its diligence in bringing forth amendments recommended by stakeholders, which have truly strengthened this bill. A collaborative approach was certainly our major intent when the government took the rare step of referring the bill to committee prior to second reading. I believe we need to thank the Privacy Commissioner, the chair of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, and individuals like Professors Craig Forcese and Kent Roach for their helpful testimony before the committee, which helped to ensure that the bill is the best and as sound as it could be.

Indeed, it is thanks to these many months of close scrutiny that we now have a new component of the bill, the avoiding complicity and mistreatment by foreign entities act. To be clear on this point, Canada unequivocally condemns in the strongest possible terms the torture or other mistreatment of any individual by anyone for any purpose. It is contrary to the charter, the Criminal Code, and Canada's international treaty obligations, and Canadians will never condone it. As members know, directions were issued to clarify decisions on the exchange of information with a foreign entity that, with public safety as the objective, could have the unintended consequence of Canada's contributing to mistreatment. As a former member of the Canadian Armed Forces, I feel it should always be foremost in our mind that these things can sometimes occur. Thanks to the committee's work on this bill, the new amendment would enshrine in law a requirement that directions be issued on these matters. They would be public, they would be reported on annually, and they would strengthen transparency and accountability.

I would also like to thank the committee and all those who testified for their important scrutiny of the privacy-related aspects of Bill C-59, particularly as they relates to the Security of Canada Information Sharing Act. Importantly, amendments would now cause institutions receiving information under the information sharing act to destroy or return any personal information received that does not meet the threshold of necessity. These are both welcome changes.

As a result of many months of close scrutiny, we have legislation that will ensure that privacy interests are upheld, clarify the powers of our security agencies, and further strengthen transparency and accountability beyond our initial proposals. This is important. It does not mean that legislation is forced upon people, but that we can actually ensure that legislation is strengthened through the work of this House in a collaborative process, which is a significant change from four years ago. These proposals, of course, also reflect the tens of thousands of views we heard from the remarkable engagements we had with Canadians from coast to coast to coast online and in person.

As I have noted, we followed up on our commitment to continue that engagement in Parliament. In sending the bill to committee before second reading, we wanted to ensure that this legislation is truly reflective of the open and transparent process that led to Bill C-59's creation. The bill is stronger because of the more than 40 amendments adopted by committee that reflect the important stakeholder feedback.

As we begin second reading, allow me to underline some of the bill's key proposals. Bill C-59 would strengthen accountability through the creation of a new comprehensive national review body, the national security intelligence review agency. This is a historic change for Canada. For the very first time, it would enable comprehensive and integrated scrutiny of all national security and intelligence activities across government, a whole-of-government approach. I should note that Justice O'Connor can be thanked for the first detailed blueprint of such a review system nearly a decade ago, and that this recommendation has been echoed by Senate committees and experts alike.

The government has taken these commitments even further. The creation of a new agency would mean ending a siloed approach to national security review through a single arm's-length body with a government-wide mandate. It would complement the work of the new National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, the multi-party review committee with unprecedented access to information that would put us in line with our Five Eyes partners and what other nations do around the world.

● (1305)

Through our new measures, Canadians will have confidence that Canada's national security agencies are complying with the law and that their actions are reasonable and necessary. The establishment of an intelligence commissioner would further build on that public confidence. The commissioner would be a new, independent authority helping to ensure that the powers of the security intelligence community are used appropriately and with care.

I was pleased to hear that the committee passed an amendment that would require the commissioner to publish an annual report that would describe his or her activities and include helpful statistics. Indeed, all of these measures complement other significant new supports that would promote Canadians' understanding of the government's national security activities.

These include adopting a national security transparency commitment across government to enable easier access to information on national security, with implementation to be informed by a new advisory group on transparency. Transparency and accountability are crucial for well-informed public debate, and we need them now after a decade of darkness under the Conservatives. Indeed, they function as a check on the power of the executive branch. As members of the legislative branch, it is our job to hold the executive branch to account. They also empower Canadians to hold their government to account.

I am confident the proposals that have been introduced in the form of Bill C-59 would change the public narrative on national security and place Canadians where they should be in the conversation, at its very heart, at its very centre, at the heart of Canada, like Winnipeg-Centre is the heart of Canada.

We also heard loud and clear that keeping Canadians safe must not come at the expense of our rights and freedoms, and that previous efforts to modernize our security framework fell short in that regard. Indeed, Canadians told us they place great value in our constitutionally protected rights and freedoms. These include the right to peaceful protest, freedom of expression, and freedom of association. They also told us that that there is no place for vague language when it comes to the powers of our security bodies or the definitions that guide their actions.

Once again, because we took the time to listen to Canadians in the largest public safety consultations ever held in Canadian history, and talked to stakeholders and to parliamentarians, we can now act faithfully based on the input we received. First, we all understand that bodies like CSIS take measures to reduce national security threats to Canada. Our proposals clarify the regime under which CSIS undertakes these measures, they better define its scope, and they add a range of new safeguards that will ensure that CSIS's actions comply with our charter rights.

However, to be clear, the amendments in Bill C-59 have not diluted the authority CSIS would have to act, but rather have clarified that authority. For example, the bill would ensure that CSIS has the ability to query a dataset in certain exigent circumstances, such as when lives or national security are at stake. Even then, there are balances in place in the bill that would mean that these authorities would require the advance approval of the intelligence commissioner.

The amendments by the committee would also strengthen key definitions. For example, they would clarify terms like "terrorist propaganda" and key activities like "digital intelligence collection". All of these changes are long overdue and are of critical importance to this country.

National security matters to Canadians. We measure our society by our ability to live free of fear, day after day, with opportunities to thrive guided by the principles of openness, equality, and fairness for all. However, Canadians are not naive about the context in which we find ourselves today in a changing environment and a changing threat landscape.

It is incumbent upon us as parliamentarians to be vigilant, proactive, and thorough in making sure that our national security framework is working for all Canadians. That means making sure that the agencies protecting us have the resources and powers they need to do so. It also means making sure that we listen to Canadians, and making them a partner in our society and security. It also means building on the values that help to make our country safe, rather than taking away from them, and understanding that a free and open society enhances our collective resilience.

On all fronts, Bill C-59 is not just a step in the right direction, but a giant leap forward for Canada. I proudly stand behind this legislation. Once again, I would like to thank all members of the committee who have done important work.

[*Member spoke in Cree*]

● (1310)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is a giant step for Canada. Bill C-59 is an omnibus bill. It is 138 pages long. While we were at it, we could have settled the whole issue around the totally unacceptable ministerial directive on torture once and for all.

For some time now, we have been urging the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to repeal and replace the 2010 ministerial directive on torture. We need to make sure that Canada upholds the total ban on torture and, more specifically, does not, under any circumstances, make use of intelligence that foreign countries may have obtained through torture.

Unfortunately, the new directive introduced in 2017 does not ban the RCMP, our spies, or our border agencies from using intelligence that was obtained through torture in other countries.

Why make an omnibus bill, a giant step for Canada, but not ban the use of intelligence obtained through torture?

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, the bill is indeed very big, but it deals with just one subject: national security. It was vital that we take the time to thoroughly study the issue, and that is what we did. The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security heard from security experts who gave testimony setting out their point of view and explaining how important it was.

This is no small matter. It can be divided into several smaller components, but it is important to have a big-picture perspective of national security. We must not compartmentalize. For decades, the various elements of our security were compartmentalized, with a little bit here and a little bit there. We need to gather all these elements together to see the big picture.

[*English*]

Craig Forcese from the University of Toronto and expert Kent Roach said in an article that the bill represents "...solid gains—measured both from a rule of law and civil liberties perspective...at no credible cost to security." They also said that "...[It] rolls back much of the unnecessary overkill of the Harper era's Bill C-51."

University of Toronto expert Wesley Wark, said that "If Canada can make this new system work, it will return the country to the forefront of democracies determined to hold their security and intelligence systems to account...."

That is testimony from expert witnesses at committee.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre not only for his intervention today but for his service to Canada in his work with the Canadian Armed Forces and for the services he provides his community, regardless of the background of a person. Regardless of their economic status and regardless of where they are coming from and the challenges they are facing, he does defend them and provides a voice for them in Ottawa.

I wonder if the hon. member could share the impact that legislation like this can have on marginalized people, marginalized groups, and people who are otherwise discriminated against.

●(1315)

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, in Winnipeg Centre, this was a huge concern just before the last election. People were very concerned, because a lot of people in Winnipeg Centre like to have peaceful protests. They like the opportunity to stand up and voice their opinion, and many indigenous people want to stand up and protest.

I remember when I was with the Idle No More movement in shopping malls on Portage and Main, which our mayor is looking at opening up. We were nervous in the indigenous community that the government would use the old legislation to destroy and take away our civil liberties, our civil rights, our freedoms, which are guaranteed under the charter. We were worried that it would use legislation and that we would have to go through the court system for decades to try to win those freedoms back.

This legislation tries to strike a balance between, on the one hand, the threats that we face in the modern world that we know exist on security fronts in a changing environment, and on the other hand ensuring that we can protect those civil liberties. It means that if marginalized groups, indigenous groups, and average Canadians decide to go out in the streets and protest for the things they hold most dear, the issues they believe in, it would not be criminalized and treated as a security threat but welcomed, because we need informed protest in our society. We need people who participate in our democracy. It is important that everyone have that opportunity and that it be protected.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, it is important to rise to speak to this fundamental bill. As I mentioned earlier, at 138 pages, Bill C-59, an act respecting national security matters, is a real omnibus bill. Unfortunately, there are still problems with this bill. That is why we are going to have to oppose it. It does not meet all our expectations.

We opposed Bill C-51. We were the only ones to support compliance with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in order to safeguard Canadians' rights and freedoms in 2015. The Liberals and the Conservatives voted for that bill, which was condemned by all Canadians. That is the reason why the Liberals later stated in their campaign that the bill made no sense and that they would rescind it if they were elected. They have finally woken up three years later. Unfortunately, the bill does not deliver on those promises.

There are elements missing. For example, the Liberals promised to fully repeal Bill C-51, and they are not doing that. Another extremely important thing that I want to spend some time talking about is the fact that they should have replaced the existing ministerial directive on torture in order to ensure that Canada stands for an absolute prohibition on torture. A lawful society, a society that respects the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the UN Charter of Rights, should obviously not allow torture. However, once again, Canada is somewhat indirectly complicit in torture that is happening around the world. We have long been calling on the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to repeal and replace the 2010 directive on torture to ensure that Canada stands for an absolute prohibition on torture. More specifically, we want to ensure that, under no circumstances, will Canada use information from foreign countries that could have been obtained using torture or share information that is likely to result in torture. We have bad memories of the horrors endured by some Canadians such as Maher Arar, Abdullah Almaki, Amhad Abou El Maati, and Muayyed Nureddin. Canadians have suffered torture, so we are in some way complicit. It is very important that we resolve this problem, but unfortunately, the new directive, issued in October 2017, does not forbid the RCMP, CSIS, or the CBSA from using information that may have been obtained through torture in another country.

The new instructions feature not a single semantic change, since they authorize the use of information obtained by torture in certain cases. That is completely unacceptable. Canada should take a leading role in preventing torture and should never agree to use or share information that is likely to result in torture in other countries around the world. We should be a leader on this issue.

There is another extremely important file that I want to talk about that this bill does not address and that is the infamous no-fly list. This list and the unacceptable delays in funding redress mechanisms are regrettable. There is currently no effective redress mechanism to help people who suffer the consequences from being added to this list. Some Canadian families are very concerned. They want to protect their rights because children are at risk of being detained by airport security after mistakenly being added to the list, a list that prevents them from being able to fly.

●(1320)

We are very worried about that. We are working with No Fly List Kids. We hope that the Liberal government will wake up. It should have fixed this situation in this bill, especially considering that this is an omnibus bill.

Speaking of security, I want to mention two security-related events that occurred in Drummond that had a significant impact. The first was on May 29 and was reported by journalist Ghyslain Bergeron, who is very well known in Drummondville. A dozen or so firefighters from Saint-Félix-de-Kingsey were called to rescue a couple stranded on the Saint-François river. Led by the town's fire chief, Pierre Blanchette, they headed to the area and courageously rescued the couple. It is extremely important to acknowledge acts of bravery when we talk about the safety our our constituents.

I also want to talk about Rosalie Sauvageau, a 19-year-old woman who received a certificate of honour from the City of Drummondville after an unfortunate event at a party in Saint-Thérèse park. A bouncy castle was blown away by the wind, and she immediately rushed the children out of the bouncy castle, bringing them to safety. Not long after, a gust of wind blew one of the bouncy castles into Rivière Saint-François. Fortunately, Rosalie Sauvageau had the presence of mind, the quickness, and the courage to keep these children safe. I mentioned these events because the safety and bravery of our fellow citizens is important.

To come back to the bill, I must admit that there are some good things in it, but there are also some parts that worry us, in particular the new definition of an activity that undermines the security of Canada. This definition was amended to include any activity that threatens the lives or the security of individuals, or an individual who has a connection to Canada and who is outside Canada. This definition is pernicious and dangerous, because it will now include activities that involve significant or widespread interference with critical infrastructure.

The Liberal government just recently purchased the Kinder Morgan pipeline, a 65-year-old pipeline that the company originally bought for $500,000. The government bought it for the staggering price of $4.5 billion, with money from the taxes paid by Canadians and the people of greater Drummond, and claimed that it was essential to Canada.

Does that mean that the Liberal government could tell the thousands of people protesting against this pipeline that they are substantially obstructing essential infrastructure?

We are rather concerned about that. This clause of the bill creates potential problems for people who peacefully protest projects such as the Kinder Morgan pipeline. That is why we are voting against this bill. The Liberals have to go back to the drawing board. We must improve this bill and ensure that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is upheld.

● (1325)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the NDP is being downright silly. To give the impression that the Liberal government would even bring forward legislation that would not allow for peaceful demonstrations is just silly.

Quite frankly, it was a Liberal Party that put the rights and freedoms in our charter back in the early 1980s. It also put forward legislation that put together a group of parliamentarians to protect our rights and freedoms. There is nothing wrong with peaceful demonstrations. We have fought for that for many years.

Having been a member of the force and having had many discussions with war veterans in the past, I do not quite understand why the New Democrats have taken the position to not support the legislation. If that is the only reason they will vote against the legislation, they should go back to the drawing board and get a better appreciation of the legislation and what it would advance.

I voted in favour of Bill C-51 because I believed there needed to be a balance. This government committed to fix Bill C-51, and this bill would do that. It would improve the bill. Could the member expand on why he believes peaceful demonstrations would be disallowed under the legislation?

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Winnipeg North should watch his language.

I think I delivered a very respectful speech, I did not attack anyone in the House, and I stated the facts. People are entitled to disagree with their colleagues, but that is no reason to be disrespectful. In fact, I believe it is against the rules of the House.

That being said, if my colleague is so eager to defend the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, then why does the ministerial directive still allow the possibility of using information obtained by torture? Why was this not resolved in 2017 when it could have been?

That is my question for him, but I stand by the fact that this bill creates more opportunities for protesters to be arrested or considered criminals. That is what it says in the bill, and I say that respectfully, not in an unpleasant way as he did.

● (1330)

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is an aspect of the bill with which the New Democrats have had some trouble. The NDP tried to move an amendment that would remove the threat reduction powers of CSIS. My colleagues may recall that CSIS was created out of a recommendation from the Macdonald Commission, which stated that intelligence-gathering should be separated from policing. CSIS and the RCMP, historically, have had a lot of trouble working together.

Would my friend agree with me that by allowing CSIS to keep this threat reduction power, the potential exists that CSIS may inadvertently harm an RCMP investigation? Instead of that, we should leave threat reduction powers to the RCMP and encourage CSIS to be an intelligence-gathering agency and work more constructively with the RCMP.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right.

In fact, that is why the NDP called for the creation of a national security and intelligence committee of parliamentarians. Such a committee would have had access to all classified information and full oversight authority, which would have helped a lot. We also do not want CSIS and the RCMP to have mandates that allow them to violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms or other Canadian or international laws. In addition to removing the directive on torture, those three measures would have improved the bill enough that we could have voted in favour of it.

[*English*]

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to the bill. Bill C-59 is legislation that our government committed to prior to the last election. It came from a very disconcerting perspective that Canadians had with regard the legislation passed by the former government, Bill C-51.

Bill C-59 would enhance Canada's national security, while safeguarding the values, rights and freedoms of Canadians. That is very important. The bill before the House today would uphold our commitment to fix the problematic elements of the former Bill C-51, notably by tightening the definition of "terrorist propaganda"; protecting the right to advocate and protest; upgrading the no-fly list procedures; and ensuring the paramountcy of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It would also strengthen our accountability and transparency by creating the national security and intelligence review agency and a position of intelligence commissioner. These would complement the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, which was created by Bill C-22.

In addition, Bill C-59 would also bring our security and intelligence legislation into the 21st century. Much of that legislation was written in the 1980s, before the revolution of information technology, which has transformed the national security and the intelligence landscape. Bill C-59 would ensure that our agencies could keep pace with evolving threats and to keep us safe, and that our laws would also keep pace in order to protect Canadians' rights and freedoms in the digital world.

Canadians had asked for the bill. It is what Canadians wanted. It is the result of being able to modernize our national security system in the country, doing so with the input of Canadians and many experts from across the country.

Today, I am pleased to speak about the proposed amendments in the bill to the Youth Criminal Justice Act, which is included in part 8 of the National Security Act of 2017. Through this set of amendments, our government is taking action to ensure that all youth, who are involved in the criminal justice system, are afforded the enhanced procedural and other protections provided by Canada's Youth Criminal Justice Act.

Before addressing the substance of the proposed amendments, I would like to provide a bit of background about the Youth Criminal Justice Act so people understand this federal law. We call it the YCJA, and it is the law that governs Canada's justice system for youth. It applies to young people between the ages of 12 to 17 who commit criminal offences, including terrorism offences. They are dealt with under the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

The act recognizes that the youth justice system must be separate from the adult system and it must be based on the principle of diminished moral blameworthiness of youth. It emphasizes rehabilitation and reintegration, just and proportionate responses to offending, and enhanced procedural protections for youth. The act also recognizes the importance of involving families, victims, and communities in the youth criminal justice system.

The YCJA contains a number of significant legal safeguards to ensure that young people are treated fairly and that their rights are fully protected. For example, as a general rule, the privacy of youth who are dealt with under the YCJA is protected through publication bans on their identity and significant restrictions to access to youth records. Young people also have enhanced rights to counsel, including state-provided counsel, and the right to have parents or other guardians present throughout key stages of the investigative and judicial processes.

While many aspects of the criminal procedure are similar in the youth and adult criminal justice system, the YCJA establishes distinct legal principles, projections, and options for dealing with youth who are alleged to have committed a criminal offence.

●(1335)

If a young person is charged, all proceedings take place in youth court. As I previously noted, while youth court proceedings are open to the public, the YCJA imposes restrictions on the publication of a youth's identity.

In addition, the YCJA establishes clear restrictions on access to youth records, setting out who may access the records, the purpose for which youth records may be used, and the time periods during which access to the records is even permitted.

Generally speaking, the penalties that are set out in the Criminal Code do not apply to youth. Instead the Youth Criminal Justice Act sets out the specific youth sentencing principles, their options, and their durations. There are a broad range of community-based youth sentencing options and clear restrictions on the use of custodial sentences.

As we turn to Bill C-59, it is important to recognize that there have been very few cases in Canada in which a young person has become involved in the youth criminal justice system due to terrorism-related offences. Nonetheless, it is important to ensure that when this does occur, the young person is afforded all of the enhanced procedural and other protections under the Youth Criminal Justice Act as other youth criminals are afforded.

Part 8 of Bill C-59 would amend certain provisions of the Youth Criminal Justice Act to ensure that youth protections would apply in relation to anti-terrorism and other recognizance orders. It would also provide for access to youth records for the purposes of administering the Canadian passport order, which I will explain a bit further in a few moments, and would be subject to the special privacy protections set out in the act. This would eliminate any uncertainty about the applicability of certain provisions to a youth for whom a recognizance order is being sought, including provisions relating to a youth's right to counsel and to detention of the youth.

In addition, there is currently no access period identified for records relating to recognizance orders, so the YCJA would be amended to provide that the access period for these records would be six months after the order expires.

In addition, Part 8 of Bill C-59 would amend the act to specifically permit access to youth records for the purpose of administering Canada's passport program. The Canadian passport order contemplates that passports can be denied or revoked in certain instances of criminality or in relation to national security concerns.

For example, section 10.1 of the Canadian passport order stipulates that the Minister of Public Safety may decide to deny or revoke a passport if there are reasonable grounds, including that revocation is necessary to prevent the commission of a terrorism offence, or for the national security of Canada or a foreign country or state. Basically, the amendment would allow the Canadian passport office to access this information. Of course it would still fall within the privacy regulations of the country, but it would allow the office to assess an application and to determine if a youth would still be a security threat to Canada.

Canadians can be assured that our government is addressing national security threats, while continuing to protect the democratic values, rights, and freedoms of Canadians. We feel that along with other elements of the national security reform package that has been put forward by our government, these laws reform measures and demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that our laws are fair, that they are effective, and that they respect the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

As my colleagues look through Bill C-59, they will note that tremendous effort has been made on behalf of the minister and many in Parliament to ensure that the legislation responds to the safety and security needs of Canadians in a democratic way, in the way that Canadians have asked.

The bill has been through many hours of consultation. It has been through many hours of debate both in committee and the House of Commons. People from each end of the country have had an opportunity to provide feedback into the reforms of Bill C-51, which is now compiled as Bill C-59.

The Canadian Security and Intelligence Service Act ensures there is accountability of Canadian security and intelligence services for all Canadians. This legislation responds to what Canadians have asked for and it is supported by experts who study this field within Canada.

● (1340)

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was looking in the dictionary. It was interesting, having a chance to go through the dictionary. "Repudiate" means to "refuse to accept or be associated with". The Canadian public repudiated the security policies associated with the Harper Conservatives, because they did not consult or talk to Canadians. They used old ways of thinking and put forward Bill C-51, which Canadians repudiated.

I was wondering if the hon. member for Labrador could talk about how this bill is going to improve our national security, how it is striking a balance, and how the consultations with thousands upon thousands of individuals from across Canada, including experts, actually improved it. It would make sure that we strike a balance, and not between the extremes of no security and the harsh measures put forward by the Harper Conservatives. The bill would actually strike a balance in our national security, ensuring the safety of Canadians and the protection of our most dear and protected value: our freedoms.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Winnipeg Centre for his question and for his remarks on this bill, which were very comprehensive.

It goes without saying that this bill is our way of keeping our promise to Canadians to fix Bill C-51, which was brought forward by the Harper government and has been problematic in many ways.

A lot of people would say that this is taking a giant leap forward in terms of accountability for our national security and intelligence agencies. That is what we should be doing in the 21st century: modernizing this legislation. What the bill is also doing is protecting our democratic freedoms and our ability to have peaceful protests, to stand up for what we believe in this country without fear of prosecution.

● (1345)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to offer our hon. colleague an opportunity to perhaps clarify or change her comments. Maybe the microphone was not working. We were having technical difficulties earlier, so maybe I heard this wrong.

I believe, in her preamble, our hon. colleague said that Bill C-59 was modernizing legislation from the 1980s. We know that especially after 9/11, this type of legislation was definitely up to date.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, what I said was that much of the legislation we were dealing with was written in the 1980s. If we go back through the previous legislation, members will see that many of those things were on the books as they related to national security and intelligence in the landscape of Canada. What this bill is doing is bringing us into a different era.

It will ensure that our agencies can keep pace with evolving threats to keep us safe and that our laws would also keep pace to protect Canadians' rights and freedoms in a digital world. Bill C-59 speaks to those intricate pieces.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is passing strange to hear the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre go to a dictionary definition of "repudiate" in the context of Bill C-51. Last I checked, to repudiate something means to reject it, not to vote for it. The Liberals voted for Stephen Harper's Bill C-51. While the Conservatives may have cheered, Canadians did not.

Could the member tell us what has changed since the Liberals voted for Mr. Harper's Bill C-51, the bill that did not get the balance correct between civil liberties and the need for security? Could the member tell us what is significantly different about this bill and maybe why her colleagues voted for Bill C-51 in the last Parliament?

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, maybe I can best speak to this by quoting the experts from the University of Ottawa and the University of Toronto, who said that this is the biggest reform of Canadian national security law since 1984 and the creation of CSIS. We have needed this for a while. They said that there "are solid gains —measured both from a rule of law and civil liberties perspective— and come at no credible cost to security".

The bill is supported by Amnesty International, civil liberties groups, and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. These are the people who are standing up to support this to ensure that there is a balance between the safety and security of Canadians and our right to democratically act in a way that we feel is important.

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. *Speaker*, I appreciate the opportunity to bring this to the top of the hour and to bring forward some general remarks on this piece of legislation. Not having been a member of the committee, I find it refreshing to take a look at this matter and to provide some perspective on it.

There are two ways to look at bills such this. We can look at the very detailed technical aspects, and we can look at a philosophical overview. In this speech, I will attempt to provide a bit of a blend of the two approaches.

One of the problems I have when I look at this legislation is that it has seemed to come forward with the general concept that our security forces, the RCMP, CSIS, and the Communications Security Establishment, have too much authority, too great an ability to disrupt and take activities to go forward to fight terrorism. The philosophy of this legislation seems to be to take steps to actually restrict our security organizations from implementing steps to go forward to fight terrorism and threats to our national security. I am fairly concerned about that, because it seems to be a habit of the government to take political nuance from what is happening in the United States and to apply that to Canada.

I understand by talking with a lot of voters and other people that they often confuse legislation and activities in the United States with what we do here in Canada. Our legislation and our activities are fairly different. There is a section in this legislation that indicates and makes clear that the government and the security forces do not engage in torture and activities like that. Of course, Canadian security organizations never have.

Looking at things such as that in the legislation, I begin to think that perhaps the government was responding to perceptions of what was happening in the United States. That is an important thing for Canadians to realize. What happens in other countries does not necessarily happen here, even though we may hear about things on the news and assume that they affect our country as well.

With that in mind, let me express a few concerns I have about this legislation. One of the things the legislation does is make it more difficult for government organizations to share information internally between one department and another and between one organization and another. That is a concern Canadian parliamentarians have had for many years. If the organizations' security apparatus become too siloed, and the information becomes too internalized, organizations that need the information cannot act upon it. This is fairly well documented and well known in Canada because of the great tragedy of the Air India disaster, when the RCMP was unable to get all the information around to everyone who needed it.

This is concerning, because it seems that we are taking a step back from previous legislation, in which we tried to have organizations, security personal, and police who needed the information have access to information from other departments. That is very much concerning.

I understand the concern that information will be misused or that information will be inappropriately obtained, but I think it is probably better to look at whether the information is necessary and whether it is appropriate in the first place. That may be the point the government should perhaps concentrate on in its legislation. If the information is necessary, valid, and properly obtained, it should be shared widely and easily so that the information can be applied for our security.

Another major concern I have with this legislation is the change on advocacy and the promotion of terrorism. This is one of those areas where I understand that there are difficulties between very robust freedom of speech and crossing the line over to what is advocating for terrorism, which is advocating for the destruction of our society.

I am very concerned about this, because here is the problem. This problem also ties in with the ability to disrupt, and I will talk about that later on. We need, in our society, to be able to get ahead of terrorism and terrorist activities before they actually cause the loss of life, before they cause damage to our institutions.

● (1150)

This is why we need to have fairly robust measures in our legislation to block the advocacy and promotion of terrorism. There are organizations that come very close to the line. Everyone knows what they are implying, without their explicitly stating that terrorism is good and necessary, whether directly against Canada or other places in the world. We know they are indicating to people what they want them to do. They use this to help raise funds and support, helping to build a cause that most Canadians would find repugnant. That is why I find it distressing that the government has watered-down these provisions in this legislation.

I would urge the government members to think very carefully about this, because we need to be able to stop terrorism before it happens. We need to be able to cut off the funds, political support, and the philosophical and public relations activities of terrorist organizations before they actually get to a point where they can damage our society.

That ties into my next concern about this legislation, which is the restriction on threat disruption. I think the latter is fairly commonsense to most Canadians when they look at it. We would like to our security organizations, our police forces, to be able to interfere and stop an event before it happens. I know that some members of the NDP have expressed concerns that this power should perhaps not belong with CSIS, but with the RCMP. However, here is the problem. If CSIS or the RCMP has information that something is going to happen imminently, they need to be able to move fairly quickly and rapidly, and not have to worry about the administrative procedures on how to get there. This is something that I have great concerns about.

I am going to make a couple of quick recommendations in the two minutes I have left about what the government could perhaps concentrate on in future legislation, or in related legislation, that would help our security. Number one, the government should concentrate intensely on the technological aspects of cyberwarfare, cyberterrorism, and things like that going forward, not just by private sector actors but also by state actors, as we have seen in other countries. This is becoming increasingly important and of increasing interest, and I would urge the government to take a look at the necessary steps to increase support for that, to look at legislative steps to get more tools, funding, and support to deal with those issues.

Finally, the government needs to look at the potential of Canada's having a foreign intelligence service getting ahead of threats before they come to Canada. We talk about globalization, and it is in many ways good. We can travel to more places. We have trade between Canada and other parts of the world, but increasingly when it comes to security issues, we are in a position where we, as Canadians, cannot really look to our own borders. We need to begin to think abroad. We are one of the few major powers in the world that do not have a foreign intelligence service. It is something that I recommend the government do. There are other recommendations and other things in this legislation that my colleagues have gone through, which I recommend the government take to heart.

Again, my major concerns about this bill are with its philosophical approach. This bill criticizes and implies that our security system is overly weak. I do not agree with that. I think the RCMP, CSIS, and the members of the Canadian security establishment have done a good job protecting our country, and I think the legislation by the previous government went in the right direction. Therefore, I urge the government to reconsider many of the changes it introduces in this legislation.

● (1355)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Saskatoon—University will have five minutes of questions asked of him when we return to debate on Bill C-59.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, QD): Mr. Speaker, dairy producers are worried that supply management will be sacrificed at the NAFTA talks. Their concern is understandable, because the government has been talking out of both sides of its mouth.

Here in the House, the Liberals say they will concede nothing. In contrast, in an interview with an American broadcaster, the Prime Minister said he would be flexible. There is a world of difference between conceding nothing and being flexible.

The G7 kicks off tomorrow, and the Prime Minister will have a bilateral meeting with President Trump. We know Mr. Trump had some sharp words about supply management this week.

I want the Prime Minister to resist taking the easy way out. I would remind him that the House unanimously adopted a motion calling on the government to protect the integrity of supply management during NAFTA negotiations. The Prime Minister must keep his promise to our dairy producers.

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[*English*]

INVERARY INN

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today with truly sad news. A landmark in Cape Breton, the Inverary Inn, was destroyed in a massive fire last night. Many in the House and visitors from around the world are familiar with the inn. The Liberal caucus gathered there just a few years ago and had a wonderful retreat along the Bras d'Or lakes.

The Inverary Inn was opened in the late 1800s as a three-storey house. During World War II, the estate was purchased and founded as the Inverary Inn after Scottish Inverary Castle. The inn expanded over time, but always kept its Scottish charm. Alongside the MacAulays, many dedicated staff contributed to an unforgettable experience for their guests. I was 16 years old the first time I experienced the warmth and hospitality of the inn delivering eggs from our family farm. My wife Pam and I had many wonderful stays at the inn.

Our thoughts are with the MacAulay family and the people of Baddeck with this difficult loss, but I know Baddeck, a resilient community, will overcome this devastation.

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● (1400)

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal carbon tax harms Canada's agricultural industry and unfairly penalizes rural communities, a reality that the Liberal agriculture minister continues to disregard. Instead, the agriculture minister declared that most farmers fully support the Liberal carbon tax and went so far as to say that farmers got exactly what they voted for. It is unclear what evidence the minister has to support that statement.

One would be hard pressed to find a single farmer in my riding of Battlefords—Lloydminster who supports the carbon tax. My constituents are concerned that it undermines their competitiveness and hurts their already-strained bottom line. On top of that, contrary to the Liberal government's claims that it is working together with provinces, it refuses to acknowledge the merits of a made-in-Saskatchewan plan to tackle climate change.

The Liberal government needs to listen to the serious concerns of farmers and rural communities, drop its punitive carbon tax, and work in co-operation with my province of Saskatchewan.

DOUG MCDONALD

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to Doug McDonald, a wonderful member of our Liberal family, who passed away on May 22 in Vernon, just shy of his 79th birthday.

Doug and I served on the federal Senior Liberals' Commission in B.C., he as policy chair and I as president. Doug was a catalyst, someone with a fine mind and a gentle but firm and focused disposition, who guided substantial policy resolutions from B.C. seniors to adoption at our 2014, 2016, and 2018 Liberal conventions, resolutions such as "Reclaiming and Sustaining Canada's Healthcare", which have helped build our platforms and, through them, improve life for all Canadians right across our country. Quietly, efficiently, and effectively, this intelligent, thoroughly gentle man made a difference, from his days managing energy research with the Government of Alberta to his unretiring retirement in B.C.

We thank his wife Rae and his wonderful family from the bottom of our hearts for sharing Doug with us.

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LABOUR

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to my motion, Motion No. 195, a motion to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike.

Despite the fact that the iconic image of the strike is an overturned streetcar, the remarkable feature of the strike was that with about 30,000 workers on strike, the Central Strike Committee effectively ran the city peacefully for six weeks. The purpose of the strike was simply to secure the right to bargain collectively, and it ended only after the strike leaders were arrested on trumped-up charges and an act of state violence killed two workers and injured many more. The strike showed how readily the powers of the state can be co-opted by the rich and powerful to suppress the legitimate demands of working people. However, it also showed the power that workers have when they stand together in solidarity, a power that would be used to win the labour standards we now enjoy across the country today.

The battle to protect and expand those standards continues. I call on Parliament to recognize the strike for its role in inspiring workers across the country to demand a better life for themselves and their neighbours.

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COMMUNITY BUILDERS OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Mrs. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, I had the pleasure of attending the United Way Centraide annual Community Builder of the Year Awards Gala. The 2018 recipients were a group of amazing organizations from across Ottawa who support our community.

[*Translation*]

One of the recipients was EcoEquitable, a dynamic Ottawa—Vanier charity that supports social and economic integration for those in need, especially immigrant women. This Vanier charity just completed its biggest order yet, producing conference bags made of recycled materials for visiting media at the G7.

[*English*]

This small environmentally friendly charity is having a real impact in my community and will soon have a footprint around the world. I ask that members join me in congratulating EcoEquitable.

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JUSTICE

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is attempting to reduce penalties for many serious crimes in Canada. His proposed changes are part of Bill C-75, which contains more than 300 pages of sweeping changes to the Criminal Code. I am concerned about the number of very serious offences that would now be eligible for much lighter sentences, or even simply fines. These offences include acts related to terrorism; assault; impaired driving; arson; human trafficking; and infanticide, the killing of infants. These lower sentences send the wrong messages to criminals, victims, law-abiding Canadians, and society.

When virtue takes a back seat to lawlessness, Canadians rely on a strong justice system. Deterrents are necessary. It is a cause for concern that our Prime Minister is changing our Canada from a nation of virtue to one of virtue signalling.

Conservatives will continue to stand up to the creeping changes attacking our social and justice systems. We will continue to place the rights of victims ahead of the offenders.

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● (1405)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, film director Oleg Sentsov entered the fourth week of his hunger strike in an Arctic hard-labour penal colony 5,000 kilometres from his native Crimea. He is slowly starving to death to raise awareness of 74 Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar political prisoners who have been abducted to Russia and put on show trials for their opposition to Russia's military annexation of Crimea.

Sentsov's case is being championed by European and Canadian cultural figures, yet when a journalist asked President Putin about Sentsov, he snapped that Sentsov was part of a terrorist community —this from the president whose military invasion of Ukraine has killed 11,000, whose pilots bomb civilian markets and hospitals in Syria, who shields those who shot down MH-17, and who poisons and assassinates opponents and journalists.

It is time to use the Magnitsky law and sanction Sentsov's abductors, torturers, prosecutors, and show-trial judges.

[*Translation*]

PORTUGAL DAY

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on June 10, the Portuguese diaspora around the world celebrates Portugal Day. Among the many things we celebrate, the culture and language that have shaped us are what brings us all together.

I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to the several thousand Portuguese who settled in Canada and who brought with them suitcases filled with much more than just wine or *natas*.

More than anything, a Portuguese person who lives abroad is someone who exports their Portuguese identity and way of life to the world.

The contributions that Portuguese people make in the countries that welcome them are well known and generally very appreciated. As a member of this big family that is our diaspora, I wish us all a *bom Dia de Portugal*.

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[*English*]

PONOKA STAMPEDE

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on June 26, the town of Ponoka, Alberta will open its doors to the entire world as the Ponoka Stampede begins. The Ponoka Stampede is the largest Canadian Professional Rodeo Association-approved rodeo, and one of the top 10 rodeos in the world.

The best cowboys and cowgirls in North America travel to the Ponoka Stampede to compete on the finest rodeo stock for over half a million dollars in prize money. This year's theme is the Canada 2019 Winter Games, and we are very honoured to welcome Catriona Le May Doan as the parade marshal.

The Ponoka Stampede is proudly Canada's largest seven-day rodeo and has some of the best rodeo action to be seen anywhere. Whether one likes barrel racing or bull riding, chuckwagons or wild pony races, one should head to Ponoka between June 26 and July 2. There is something for everybody. Yee-haw.

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INCLUSIVITY AWARD

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to pay tribute to a champion for accessibility, Tyler Barker. Tyler was recently awarded the Town of Aurora's 2018 inclusivity award. He has long been a tireless advocate for issues of accessibility, not just in Aurora but across York region. He has dedicated his life to breaking down barriers.

He serves as chair of Aurora's Accessibility Advisory Committee and has been instrumental in ensuring that accessibility is top of mind for all, whether it be where we shop, in our library, or in helping to create the first fully accessible park in Aurora. Tyler would be the first to tell us that more needs to be done. His inspiring leadership, passion, and commitment will ensure that progress continues.

I thank Tyler for his dedication to our community. He has helped make it a place for all. I congratulate him on the award and encourage him to keep up the great work.

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● (1410)

PRIDE MONTH

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Spadina—Fort York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in Toronto, June is one of the most beautiful months of the year. It is the month when we celebrate that our city is the safest and best place in the world to fall in love. It is Pride Month.

No matter who people are, how they express their gender, whom they love, how they love, or why they love, Toronto is the place to be, because we are celebrating people and their love this month. It is so much fun that now all of Canada has joined in, but let us face it, Toronto's Pride celebrations are the biggest and the best on the planet.

Whether it is people's first Pride or their last, whether they are marching or dancing down the street, whether they are watching from the sides or on TV, whether they are a mayor, a premier, a backbencher, or a member of cabinet, it makes no difference. Someone can be a school trustee and attend Pride. People should come and celebrate as a family, bringing their brother, sister, mom, and aunt.

On behalf of Pride Toronto, I invite one and all to the city of Toronto to celebrate and feel the love. Also, people should not forget their squirt guns.

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GIRLS' EDUCATION

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with the 2018 G7 summit starting tomorrow, we call on the government to make girls' education and empowerment an important theme. All parties in this chamber support greater access to education for women and girls throughout the developing world. There is a huge gap in girls' education as humanitarian work transitions to long-term development. In fact, millions of girls are missing out on education in the most volatile regions of the world.

Due to gender inequality, girls are 2.5 times more likely than boys to be cut from school in countries where there is a crisis. Today, we add our voice to the many NGOs calling for greater investment in the education and empowerment of girls. We also call on the government to put clear goals and targeted measures in place to ensure the success of the initiatives that are put forward.

Girls deserve the same access to education that boys enjoy. Today, we are calling on the government to play a key role in making sure that girls are empowered to achieve the greatness that is held within them.

SENATE APPOINTMENT

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise in the House today to congratulate Dr. Mohamed Ravalia from Twillingate, Newfoundland and Labrador, on his appointment to the Senate.

Dr. Ravalia fled apartheid in Zimbabwe over 30 years ago to find his new home in Canada.

His passion for rural health care has made him an exemplary family physician and academic, specializing in primary care reform, care of the elderly, and chronic disease management. As a senior medical officer at the Notre Dame Bay Memorial Health Centre, Dr. Ravalia has worked tirelessly to provide residents of Newfoundland and Labrador with optimal medical care and support. He also serves as assistant dean for the Rural Medical Education Network of Memorial University.

He has many other accomplishments as well, including the Canadian Family Physician of the Year award, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, and the Order of Canada.

I ask members to please join me in congratulating Dr. Ravalia on his appointment as the representative of the great province of Newfoundland and Labrador in the Senate.

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WORLD OCEANS DAY

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is World Oceans Day.

Oceans generate 80% of our oxygen, provide us with food, and regulate our climate. It was Canadians who first proposed World Oceans Day at Rio's Earth Summit in 1992. However, 26 years later, the issues are more overwhelming than ever: climate change, plastic pollution, open-net salmon farming, illegal fishing, and habitat destruction.

This year's theme is preventing plastic pollution and encouraging solutions for a healthy ocean.

Canada's New Democrats support our colleague from Courtenay—Alberni and his motion, Motion No. 151, which calls on the government to implement a national strategy to combat plastic pollution. Canada has no national policy, no regulations, and no mechanisms to prevent plastics from entering our waters. That is why Canadians are taking action, organizing beach cleanups, banning plastic bags, and saying no to plastic straws. It is time the federal government take action by supporting Motion No. 151 and implementing a national strategy. Let us come together today to protect our oceans for tomorrow.

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DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister does not like anyone suggesting that his way may not be the best way. When one of his bills was almost defeated, he wanted to take away every tool the opposition has to hold government accountable. When he did not like the questions being asked in the House, he tried to change the system so he had to show up at work only once a week. When he could not impose an electoral system that benefits the Liberals, he decided to change the fundraising rules. His latest plan is to limit how opposition parties can use donations from Canadians but increase the amount of foreign money that can be spent to influence our 2019 election.

On this side of the House, we believe in fair, democratic processes for all Canadians, not cheap tricks and cover-ups that favour the Liberals and their friends.

* * *

● (1415)

[*Translation*]

VISIT OF PRESIDENT OF FRANCE

Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Quebec Liberal caucus, it is an honour to rise in the House to say how pleased we are to welcome the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, to Canada. Our countries have had a strong relationship for a long time as a result of our shared history and language and also our very strong economic ties. President Macron's visit shows that we both want to continue to work together to strengthen the middle class, to help those working hard to join it, and to build more inclusive economies. Given the current international context, especially the rise of populism, the co-operation of our two countries is more necessary than ever to defend the values of peace, security, diversity, and multilateralism, which are the foundation of our liberal democracies. On this Gaspé day, and on behalf of the people of Gaspé, Quebec, and all Canadians, I hope President Macron will have a productive visit in Canada.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the possibility of the U.S. president imposing tariffs on steel and aluminum should not have come as a surprise to anyone. The president first announced them back in March. He then exempted Canada in May, and then again in June.

Why in the world was the Prime Minister not ready to immediately impose retaliatory tariffs when the U.S. president imposed his on us?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week our government announced strong measures to defend Canadian steel and aluminum workers and the industry. This includes $16.6 billion in reciprocal trade restriction measures against U.S. goods, including U.S. steel and aluminum.

This is the largest trade action Canada has taken since the Second World War, and it is essential that we get it right. Over the next few days, we invite all Canadians to look at the list of proposed tariffs and provide feedback to help create the best possible retaliation list.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government had months to prepare for this, but it did nothing. Steel and aluminum workers and their families are being hurt by these tariffs right now, but instead of having a plan ready to immediately deal with these punitive measures, the Liberals have been more focused on things like raising taxes on Canadians and giving billions of dollars to Texas oil companies. Talk about misplaced priorities.

Will the government commit, today, that all monies collected from our retaliatory measures will go directly to those who are impacted by this trade war?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure my hon. colleagues that we have the backs of our steel and aluminum workers. We find that the decision made by the United States is totally unacceptable, and we have made that very clear. To invoke national security as the grounds on which to do this is absolutely preposterous.

We will defend the interests of our aluminum and steel workers, and our Canadian steel and aluminum industry.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one thing that would have helped is if we had ratified the CPTPP. Mexico has ratified this agreement, and Japan is well on its way. Again, instead of passing CPTPP legislation, the Liberal government has been more focused on ramming through legislation that would reduce penalties for terrorists, child molesters, and drunk drivers. Again, talk about misplaced priorities.

Why are the Liberals taking so long to bring this free trade agreement into force?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, CPTPP ratification is a top priority for our government, and we are working relentlessly in order to introduce the legislation before the House rises for the summer.

The CPTPP would provide unparalleled benefits for hard-working Canadians and their families. We have worked hard to improve the deal, and we have made real gains for the middle class. We are now looking to work with all parliamentarians in the House on this important legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House are actually in favour of the trans-Pacific partnership. In fact, it was under our leadership that an initial treaty was signed, thanks to the extraordinary efforts of the member for Abbotsford. The problem is that it has yet to be implemented in Canada.

My question for the government is quite simple. Why is it that the agreement has yet to be implemented even though it has been signed and approved, and we all agree on it? The government has been dragging its feet and has yet to introduce legislation on the matter.

● (1420)

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are proud of our negotiations to conclude the CPTPP. We have also managed to achieve real gains in various sectors, including everything from culture to intellectual property to automotive. As we have said, and as the minister indicated in the House of Commons again yesterday, we will be introducing a bill to ratify this important treaty. I hope all our colleagues in the House will support us in ratifying this treaty.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the U.S.'s frontal attack on our steel and aluminum industry is completely unacceptable. In retaliation, the Government of Canada announced a series of measures last week to counter the American initiative. My question for the government is very simple and the answer will affect all steel and aluminum workers, including those in Lac-Saint-Jean, the Saguenay, and more specifically La Baie.

Will the government commit to using the money it obtains from additional tariffs on American products to help the aluminum industry and its workers, including those in La Baie?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, we announced strong measures to protect our steel and aluminum workers. We clearly said that we will be there for them. Steel and aluminum are extremely important industries for Canada. We do not accept the decision made by the United States for the absolutely ridiculous reason of national security. We will be there to defend the interests of our steel and aluminum workers.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this G7 summit will give the international community an opportunity to compare the seven countries. I can say that Canada does not come off very well on the environmental front.

The Liberals promised to end subsidies to the oil and gas industry, but after three years in power, Canada still has the highest oil and gas subsidies in the G7. The Prime Minister will have a golden opportunity to fix that this weekend.

Will he use the G7 summit as an opportunity to announce an end to these subsidies by 2020?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of what we are doing for the environment to tackle climate change and plastic pollution.

Creating a charter on plastic pollution is a top priority for the G7 leaders' meeting. We are working very hard with all the countries to make sure we are doing what needs to be done. We need to stop plastic from reaching the oceans. We are facing a major problem, and we are going to do everything in our power to fix it.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I call that wilful blindness. The government still finances the oil and gas industry to the tune of $1.5 billion a year. That is $1,500 million in subsidies to the oil and gas industry.

A champion of the environment would invest now to create green jobs for our workers and our children. The Prime Minister lost all credibility on the environment the day he decided to buy a 65-year-old pipeline with $4.5 billion of taxpayer money.

What kind of apology will the government make at the G7?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will not apologize, because we do stand up for the environment and for jobs. We are doing what we have to do. Canadians expect us to combat climate change and plastic pollution and to grow our economy.

We have created 600,000 jobs. This is the biggest job growth Canada has ever seen. We will continue to do this every day. I am working very hard to combat climate change, protect the environment—

[*English*]

The Speaker: The hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is more concerned with looking like a global climate leader to the other G7 leaders than with actually being one here at home. Instead of eliminating subsidies for fossil fuels, the Prime Minister will now spend over $10 billion to build a new pipeline. Experts agree that the Liberals, instead of keeping their promises to meet the Paris emissions targets, are nowhere near to meeting their commitments.

Here is a suggestion. How about if the Prime Minister spends a little less time worrying about how he looks to world leaders and more time actually being a leader here at home?

● (1425)

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me explain what we are doing to tackle climate change here. We are putting a price on pollution across the country. We are making historic investments in clean technologies. We are phasing out coal. We are making historic investments in public transportation.

We are going to continue doing what we promised to Canadians, which is meeting our international agreements, and we are going to continue pushing abroad. We can do both. We can talk and chew gum at the same time, and that is what we are going to do.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, do you remember the Kyoto protocol? I certainly do. That was the climate change agreement that the previous Liberal government signed and then completely abandoned. Later, Liberal insiders said they ratified it purely as a PR stunt and they never had any intention to act on it.

Now the environment commissioner is saying the government is nowhere near meeting the Paris targets. I, for one, am getting completely tired of these sequels. Canadians want to know and deserve to know if this is just another Liberal PR stunt.

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me explain again what we are doing. We spent one year working with the provinces and territories to come up with the first-ever serious plan to tackle climate change and to meet our international agreements. After a decade of inaction under the previous government, we have stepped up. We are putting a price on pollution, we are phasing out coal, and we are making historic investments in public transportation. In Ottawa, our investments in LRT will see the largest reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in our city's history.

We are investing in clean technology. We understand that we need to do it for our—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Carleton.

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TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the environment minister for pointing out the funds that John Baird and I secured for the local transit contract here in Ottawa.

The Liberals would be well served if they followed our approach to taxes as well. During our government, they went down, particularly for modest- and low-income people. Under the Liberal government, taxes have gone up for 81% of middle-class taxpayers.

How much will this carbon tax cost the average Canadian family?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased that we announced the funding for the second phase of LRT in Ottawa. I am actually happy when we work across party lines. I would really be happy if, across party lines, we would tackle climate change, because we owe it to our kids and there is a huge economic opportunity.

I fail to understand why the party opposite will not take serious action on climate change and will not take seriously the fact that our kids and grandkids will hold us responsible. They are missing out on the $23-trillion opportunity of clean growth.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to watch John Baird announce the first phase of Ottawa's light rail and I was very pleased to also announce the second phase myself. I was actually flattered to see the minister reannounce that second phase a year after we did.

However, let us go back to taxes. If only the minister could follow our approach on taxes, which was to put more money in the pockets, particularly of low- and middle-income taxpayers. Can she tell us today how much her carbon tax will cost the average Canadian family?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I am afraid I have to remind hon. members, the member for Banff—Airdrie and others, that each side gets its turn. I think they know each side gets its turn. I would ask them to listen when the other side has its turn.

The hon. Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi: Mr. Speaker, the previous government had a very bad habit of making announcements without even knowing where the money was going to come from. That is exactly what they did with transit investment in Ottawa, without even knowing or having any money in the budget.

What we have done is put forward a $25-billion investment in public transit, under which we are funding Ottawa's second phase, because we know where the money—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1430)

The Speaker: It was so quiet earlier.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, funding for both phases of the Ottawa transit were provided under the previous Conservative government, and it was set aside within the budget framework, within the context of a balanced budget.

The Liberals' deficit is twice what they promised. Taxes are up on 80% of middle-class taxpayers, which is another broken promise. Before they make a third broken promise in a row, will Liberals tell us how much the average Canadian family will spend on this carbon tax?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to repeat that on the second phase of LRT, there was no money. We were the ones who actually made the commitment to invest in public transit.

We know that climate change is real. We know that it has a real cost. We know there is a huge opportunity for economic growth and jobs. We are very proud that we are taking action on climate change.

I would like to ask the other side, because I would like to know, what the Conservative Party's plan is to tackle climate change.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one successful part of the plan that actually saw greenhouse gases go down under the previous government was a public transit tax credit that gave savings to people who made responsible decisions to get on public transit and protect the environment.

The Liberals raised taxes on those same environmentally conscious passengers on our public transit. It was one of many tax increases that have led to an $800 tax increase on the average middle-class family. How much more will those families pay under the new Liberal carbon tax?

The Speaker: Order. I would ask members, including the member for Niagara Centre, not to be interrupting when someone else has the floor.

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting to hear the member opposite announcing on this day that he supports what the Ontario Liberal government did, which was to actually phase out coal. That was the biggest reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in our country's history.

We know we need to take serious action on climate change by phasing out coal, putting a price on pollution, and making investments in green technology, but once again, as everyone wants to know, what is the Conservatives' plan?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Order. That is totally inappropriate. I do not think members want to live in a place where they cannot hear other points of view. I do not think anyone in the House believes that.

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[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, dairy, egg, and poultry producers are quite concerned about what the Prime Minister said on NBC. When he meets with Quebec farmers, he says he is defending supply management, but when he crosses the border, he says the opposite. He said that Canada was flexible on supply management. In Quebec alone, 6,500 farms depend on supply management.

Can the Prime Minister tell us, yes or no, whether he conceded market shares to the Americans by so-called protecting what will be left of supply management?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again our government is firmly committed to protecting the supply management system. The Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the 41 members from Quebec and all members of the Liberal Party are unanimous: they support and believe in supply management. I assure my colleagues that we will protect the supply management system.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister should talk to her Prime Minister because what he said on NBC was very clear. He is going to be or already has been —we do not know for sure—more flexible when it comes to the Americans' demands regarding supply management. That is not surprising. Simon Beauchemin, a key adviser to the Prime Minister, clearly supports making concessions on supply management.

I have one very simple question. Do the Liberals intend to protect, and I mean fully protect, supply management without making any concessions, yes or no?

● (1435)

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, our government is firmly committed to protecting supply management. The 41 members from Quebec and all Liberal MPs support and believe in the supply management system. Our Prime Minister and our Minister of Foreign Affairs are defending this system.

The Conservatives do not agree on the subject. Believe it or not, the Leader of the Opposition put the member for Beauce, who strongly opposes supply management, in charge of economic development.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, you might be surprised by some of the things that appear in electoral platforms. For instance, the Liberals promised to put an end to oil subsidies. It is on page 40 of the Liberal platform. Is that not surprising, especially given that, here we are three years later, and they have done nothing? Canada is dead last in the G7 on that. We are worse than Donald Trump.

My question to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change is quite simple. What was the total amount of subsidies given to oil companies last year? Obviously, the answer should be a number. I do not want her to say that it is important. We want a number.

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, phasing out inefficient fuel subsidies is a G20 commitment, and Canada is part of that commitment. We have already taken significant steps in budget 2016 and budget 2017, and we will continue to do that, as it is our international commitment and what we believe is good for the Canadian economy.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): They cannot answer how much, Mr. Speaker, because they do not know, yet a report out today shows that Canada ranks dead last in the G7.

Imagine the irony. As devoted as Donald Trump is to the oil and gas sector, he has to tip his little red cap to the Liberals because they are even worse. These climate champions went out and bought a 65-year-old leaky pipeline for $4.5 billion of our money.

Let us do some Liberal multiple choice: Was that money (a) a bailout, (b) a subsidy, (c) a really dumb idea, or (d) all of the above?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, none of the above, and none of the above because Canadians who care about the future of the oil and gas industry as part of a strategy for the Canadian economy know that to be competitive, we want to expand our export markets. Rather than sending 99% of oil and gas exports to one country, the United States, we are opening up the export markets. That is only part of why this pipeline is good for Canada and good for indigenous peoples. It is good for the environment too because of $1.5 billion—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Midnapore.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been telling Canadians that it will cost them $4.5 billion to buy the old Trans Mountain pipeline. Today we have learned that this is not actually the final price. It may cost Canadians much more, and that is without a single inch of new pipeline being built.

When will the Prime Minister quit hiding what his failures are really going to cost taxpayers?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the failure was the inability of the Harper government to build one kilometre of pipe to new markets. That is the failure. The Conservatives had 10 years to do it and they could not. The reason they could not was because they refused to understand that investments in the environment enable us to build infrastructure. We on this side of the House are very proud of our ability to create jobs and protect the environment at the same time.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister claimed that the cost of the pipeline would be $4.5 billion. We now know that it is not true, that it is just a guess. Canadians could be on the hook for a lot more than $4.5 billion for the existing pipeline, never mind the construction costs for the new pipeline.

When will the Liberals come clean and tell Canadians how much it will cost?

● (1440)

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member and the Conservative Party believe that this is a commercially viable project, because they have been promoting this project from the first day we took our seats in the House of Commons, promoting it every day aggressively, unwaveringly. However, now because we have done what they could not do, they do not know where to go with this.

We know where we are going. We are going to get the pipeline built, we are going to protect the environment, and we are going to consult indigenous peoples.

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year foreign direct investment in this country was the lowest in over a decade. Nowhere is that disaster more real than in Alberta. Tens of billions of dollars of potential oil and gas projects are being scrapped. There is massive divestment by international oil producers.

The Prime Minister's answer to this disaster? A buy-out and drive out of Kinder Morgan. When will the minister quit attacking the industry so it can begin the process of recovery and rebuild investor confidence?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when is the hon. member going to stop badmouthing the economy of Alberta? Let me give an example. Employment is up 3.5%. Earnings are up 6.9%. Wholesale trade is up 16.3%. Manufacturing is up 25.5%. Exports are up 46.5%. We believe in the people of Alberta.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, investment in Canada's energy industry increased nine out of 10 years under the previous Conservative government. Today, we have hit a decade low, with $100 billion in investment losses and major divestments from Royal Dutch Shell and ConocoPhillips totalling nearly $30 billion. Now Kinder Morgan is fleeing Canada in the face of the Liberal plan to phase out our oil sands.

Canadian energy investors are now creating a record number of new jobs outside of Canada as the Liberals block energy projects at home.

With investment at record lows and energy jobs fleeing Canada, why does the natural resources minister keep pretending this is the best he can do?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has never been stronger, and there has never been a better time to invest in Canada. We have a strong, stable, and predictable business environment that is open to business, investments, and trade.

When foreign investors look at Canada, they see an open, diverse, highly-skilled, and well-educated workforce that is inherently global. This is Canada today, and we are making sure that foreign investors know it.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister is asking leaders to commit to zero-waste plastics at the G7, hosted by the government, the meeting will not even be a zero plastic waste event. Canadians from coast to coast are calling on the Liberals to protect our oceans and ban single-use plastics at home.

Tomorrow is World Oceans Day and Canadians know we need action to combat plastic pollution in our waterways now. The Liberals have said they know that this is a critical problem, so when will they finally do something about it?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I absolutely agree with the member opposite that we have a huge problem. If we do not take action, by 2050 we are going to have more plastic waste in our ocean by weight than fish. Every minute we are dumping the equivalent of a dump truck of plastic waste into the oceans. This single-use plastic that we are throwing out has a value of between $100 billion and $150 billion. We need to do better.

We are pushing a plastic waste charter in the G7 context. We are also developing a national strategy for plastics in Canada. We are seeing in Canada that municipalities are stepping up, municipalities like Vancouver, like Montreal, banning—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in Canada, the Liberals love to claim to be defending supply management, but in the United States, the Prime Minister said there could be some flexibility in the area.

A true leader is someone who stands up for Canadian dairy farmers, someone who keeps his promises, someone who is ready to tell the G7 that he will fully defend our supply management system, without any concessions.

Is there anyone here in the House today, besides the NDP, who is ready to fully defend our supply management system without making any concessions?

● (1445)

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleague that our government, our entire caucus, is committed to defending supply management. The Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, and the 41 MPs from Quebec unanimously support the protection of the supply management system.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. T.J. Harvey (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for residents in my riding of Tobique—Mactaquac, CBC/Radio-Canada is an essential part of their lives, providing them with local news, Canadian stories, and high-quality Canadian productions.

[*Translation*]

We all remember how the Harper government slashed CBC/Radio-Canada's budget.

Could the Minister of Canadian Heritage tell the House what our government is doing to keep our public broadcaster strong?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Tobique—Mactaquac for his question.

Now more than ever, our government firmly believes in the importance of our public broadcaster. When we talk about CBC/Radio-Canada, we cannot help but remember the Conservatives' legacy.

[*English*]

The Conservatives slashed funds at the CBC, were at war with it, and did everything to weaken our public broadcaster. That is their record. Our record is reinvesting $675 million and appointing a CEO from the sector, the first woman, as head of this very important institution.

We will ensure that what the Harper Conservatives did never happens again, because they would, if given the chance.

* * *

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness has proclaimed that Canadians need not worry about 30,000 people entering Canada illegally. He says everything is under control.

However, border services officers have told us that they were instructed to cut interrogation time down from eight hours to two, that between 10% and 15% of illegal crossers do not return for their second interview, and that nobody knows where in the country those people are now.

Why is the Prime Minister refusing to talk about this problem at the G7?

[*English*]

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government remains unwavering in our commitment to protect the safety of Canadians and to keep our borders secure. Irregular border crossers are thoroughly screened and do not get a free ticket to remain in Canada. In fact, the budget included $173 million to support security operations at the Canada-U.S. border and to ensure we could continue to securely and effectively process asylum seekers.

We are continuing to ensure that Canadian law is applied and that our international obligations are respected.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): More meaningless words, Mr. Speaker.

Now let's talk about the Minister of Immigration, who is right over there. It almost looks like his intention has been to make it easy. He gave three provinces $50 million to stop complaining; he built a costly welcome centre for illegal migrants in Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle; and now, he has set up a transportation system to take illegal migrants wherever they want to go. That is right, wherever they want to go.

The minister says all the right things, but his actions only confirm his hypocrisy and disingenuousness.

Where is the Minister of Immigration's plan?

The Speaker: I must remind the hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles that, under the Standing Orders, it is not permitted to point out the presence or absence of a member. I think he knows that.

The hon. Minister of Transport.

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to be frank, my colleague has been spouting all sorts of nonsense about irregular migrants every day in the House.

We have implemented a strong program in co-operation with the provinces. We are working with the provinces on a triage system. We have rolled out the initial compensation packages for the provinces. I would like our colleague opposite to ask more constructive and less negative questions about asylum seekers because we are all working together on this important issue.

* * *

● (1450)

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have no plan and the Prime Minister is failing our Canadian Armed Forces. This week we have learned things are so bad that our soldiers are being ordered to return their rucksacks and their sleeping bags to be used by others. Now we have learned that the cost of building the joint supply ships has skyrocketed another billion dollars over budget and the forces will not even take the first delivery until probably sometime in 2023.

How can Canadians trust the Prime Minister to deliver on navy ships when he cannot even buy enough sleeping bags for our troops?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the previous Conservative government, which failed to support defence, we are ensuring that the Canadians Armed Forces have the proper equipment and training to be able to carry out the important missions they are asked to fulfill.

The Canadian Armed Forces redistribute the equipment to make sure that their members have the equipment they need when they need it. Our recruitment initiatives have been successful and have strengthened the army reserve. These new recruits will need even more equipment than those who are on postings or involved in training exercises.

[*English*]

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these partisan attacks do not change the facts on the ground. We are proud of our procurement record, which includes five C-17 Globemasters, 17 C-130 Hercules, 15 Chinook helicopters; and we initiated the contract for the *Asterix* interim supply ship, which, by the way, was on time and on budget despite the best efforts of the Liberals to kill that deal. We will put our record against their record any day of the week.

How is it possible for those incompetent Liberals to mess it up so badly when it comes to military procurement?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very proud that we are getting ships built and we are getting fighter jets for our troops. We know our armed forces desperately need the equipment to do the really difficult jobs we ask of them.

We have plans. We have a ship that is already built. We have ships that will be built by the end of this year. We are delivering our fighter jet interim fleet, starting the beginning of next year. We will take no lessons from the Conservatives on how to do defence procurements.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government has begun negotiations with the United States on the future of the 54-year-old Columbia River Treaty. During the original negotiations, more than 2,000 people were forced to relocate as rich farmland and valuable riparian areas were sacrificed, and indigenous people did not have their voices heard at all.

Now it is 2018 and despite the government's promises for a new relationship with first nations, they are not being offered a seat at the table. Will the government take immediate action to ensure that first nations are at the table for the renegotiation of the Columbia River Treaty?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our objective in these negotiations is to ensure that the Columbia River Treaty continues to be mutually beneficial for Canada, the United States, and the indigenous groups involved in the area. We have been working closely with British Columbia, first nations, and stakeholders to ensure that all interests are heard and articulated. We will also address the environmental issues they have raised and the interests of the first nations. The aim is to renew this agreement well into the 21st century.

We will work hard to ensure that benefits are optimized for Canada, British Columbia, first nations, and the local communities.

* * *

ASBESTOS

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 96% of Canadian workers in construction and the skilled trades are potentially exposed to asbestos in the workplace. We have known for more than 30 years that asbestos is a carcinogen and that its toxic fibres are a leading cause of workplace-related death in Canada. Despite the announced ban, there is no national standard for testing, handling, and removal of this killer substance.

Will the government implement a comprehensive strategy for asbestos removal to protect all workers and all Canadians?

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact, the member would know that this government has deemed asbestos to be out of the realm of our trade.

We are working with all stakeholders. There was a meeting held recently here in Ottawa that brought all stakeholders together, labour and health leaders, and that strategy is absolutely under construction. We will be looking forward to tabling something very soon.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with summer upon us, Canadians are gearing up to head out to the great outdoors, and it appears they are better equipped than our Canadian Armed Forces. Thanks to the Prime Minister's failure of leadership, our troops now face a shortfall of equipment when it comes to sleeping bags. How can the Prime Minister justify deploying our troops to a war zone in Mali when he cannot even outfit our troops for a trip to cottage country?

● (1455)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is determined to provide the Canadian Armed Forces with the equipment, training, and support they need to allow our men and women in uniform to fulfill their important mission at home and abroad. The "Strong, Secure, Engaged" policy will ensure that the Canadian Armed Forces have the right equipment and the right training to fulfill their mission. After 10 years of underfunding and cuts to the armed forces by the previous Conservative government, we are determined to ensure that our men and women in uniform are better equipped and better prepared.

* * *

[*English*]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals continue their attack on Canadian farmers and the Canadian agricultural industry. First it was a new Canada food guide and front-of-package labelling, calling milk and meat products unhealthy. Now they are attacking feed distributors.

The Liberals are eliminating the ability of retail stores, like feed stores and farm supply outlets, to sell feed mixed with antibiotics in any form to anyone. These businesses have sold these products to farmers safely and effectively for years.

When will the Liberals stop their attacks on Canadian agriculture?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I assure my hon. colleague that what we have done has been a major asset to the Canadian agricultural sector.

As my hon. colleague is well aware, the former Harper government cut close to $700 million from the agricultural sector. We will make sure that farmers have the seed they need.

My hon. colleague is fully aware that the seed has to be certified.

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if I wait for an answer from my good friend across the way, my hair will be white or have fallen out before I get a straight answer.

These new regulations will become effective in December of this year. There is still time for the Liberals to do the right thing and cancel these changes.

Farm supply and feed stores are an essential aspect of the delivery of feed to farms across Canada. These businesses are the lifeblood, as the minister should know, of many rural communities. These changes will take away their ability to sell products that they have been selling without any issues for generations.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's question, but I cannot do a thing about his hair.

However, I can tell him one thing we will do, which is to make sure that the agriculture and agrifood sector is supported by the government. We will make sure that we have science. We will also make sure that the CFIA will always ensure that any seed that is permitted for planting in this country will be certified.

I am sure that my hon. colleague is not indicating that the regulatory process should be jeopardized.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government's public transit infrastructure investments are building stronger communities across Canada, including in my riding of Davenport. These investments are much needed and are critical to ensuring that commuters can get to work, school, and appointments quickly, safely, and in an environmentally friendly way. Can the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities please update this House on the public transit investments the government is making in Toronto?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Davenport for her advocacy on this file.

We know that investing in public transit is a shared responsibility. That is why we are investing more than $934 million for the purchase of more than 1,000 new buses for the TTC, as well as the repair of hundreds of old buses. This investment will enhance transit service to millions of commuters across Toronto.

Investing in public transit is an integral part of our government's efforts to grow the economy and build a strong—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lévis—Lotbinière.

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● (1500)

[*Translation*]

ETHICS

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as if it was not enough that she spent $8 million of taxpayers' money to sharpen her skating skills, now we learn that the Minister of Canadian Heritage is spending recklessly again. She refused to listen to her officials during a stop in Seoul last April, which was unrelated to the objectives of the trade mission to China.

What did it cost us this time to indulge the Minister of Canadian Heritage's whim when she stopped in Seoul for her own personal pleasure to have us dance to K-pop?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague really should be a member of the Union des artistes because he has a really nice voice.

Our government has decided to reinvest in the arts sector, whereas the Conservatives made massive cuts and were at war with the cultural sector. We have also reinvested $125 million in a cultural exporting strategy, which we will need given that the sector is worth more than $55 million and has more than 630,000 jobs. We believe in the cultural sector. We know it can be exported anywhere in the world and we will continue to support—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

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TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the committee responsible for reviewing the Rail Safety Act conducted broad consultations and submitted its report. Many of the recommendations in that report require immediate action on the part of the minister. What does the minister want to do in response? He wants to set up round-table consultations with the stakeholders who participated in the initial consultations to find out what they think of the consultation process and the report on those consultations.

Seriously, when will the minister take responsibility and stop throwing—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Transport.

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for giving me the opportunity to thank the three people who did an excellent job reviewing the Rail Safety Act. I am very proud of the fact that we released the report a year ahead of schedule. I am sure my NDP colleague knows we are not like the Conservatives. We recognize the value of consultation. We will continue holding consultations until we feel Canadians have been adequately consulted. Then we will make decisions.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government proudly published its new defence policy one year ago today. "Strong, Secure, Engaged" is an ambitious and realistic defence policy that will allow the Canadian Armed Forces to be equipped to face the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence inform the House of the many accomplishments of our new defence policy one year after it was announced?

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin for his question.

We worked hard on developing a policy that was both ambitious and realistic and we consulted Canadians who told us clearly that we must take care of the well-being of the men and women of the armed forces and their families.

Unlike the Conservatives, we promised to increase defence spending by 70% over the next 10 years in order to ensure Canada's protection, the safety of North America, and to pursue our commitment in the world.

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[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Palestinian ambassador to France acknowledged recently that Iran "is fully financing and pushing the Hamas demonstration". Iran is spreading violence and terror throughout the region, determined to force other people to attack Israel. The government has said that it is a friend of Israel, even while it is singling Israel out for criticism, but will it be as tough on Iran? Will it call for an independent investigation into Iran's role in instigating this violence? Will it?

Mr. Matt DeCourcey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the member opposite knows full well that it has been the long-standing position of consecutive governments, both Conservative and Liberal, in Canada that we are an ally and friend of Israel, and a friend of the Palestinian people.

We absolutely deplore the actions of Hamas and its incitement to violence. It has been designated as a terrorist organization in this country since 2002, and this government maintains that position and abhors the actions that Hamas takes. We are also extremely troubled by the situation that recently occurred in Gaza and have called for an independent investigation.

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● (1505)

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, QD): Mr. Speaker, the price of gas in Quebec is approaching $1.50 a litre. When consumers fill up at the pumps, they are the ones getting hosed.

On May 29, Pierre Moreau, Quebec's minister of energy and natural resources, wrote the Minister of Economic Development to ask if he was planning to take further action to ensure that the gas market is fair, efficient, and competitive.

Could we hear the answer?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I disagree with my colleague, because we have a very good process in place.

[*English*]

The process that we have is actually being led by the Competition Bureau, which enforces the Competition Act. They look at price fixing, price maintenance, and the abuse of dominance in the market with respect to gasoline prices. The bureau, in the past, has made investigations. Thirty-nine individuals in 15 companies were charged for their role in a gasoline price fixing conspiracy in four local markets in Quebec. We will continue to monitor the situation. I am confident in the Competition Bureau's work.

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[*Translation*]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government throws Quebec under the bus all year long, but when election time rolls out, something magical happens.

On May 25, the Liberal member for Lac-Saint-Jean went out to announce $700,000 for Saguenay businesses. I do not imagine they will be adding that to their electoral expenses. The problem is not the investment itself, it is the timing. It is quite simply unacceptable.

Did the government attempt to influence the Chicoutimi byelection using public money?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows, we introduced Bill C-76, which will create a pre-election period before the general election. We have also made commitments as a government, since the government cannot run ads in the 90 days preceding a general election.

[*English*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, buying the 65-year old Trans Mountain pipeline from Kinder Morgan shows the kind of brilliant business acumen of buying up all of Blockbuster's assets while Netflix takes off. I am wondering when we will see the contract of sale. We know there are apparently 121 pages of fine legalese that could help us stop the sale before its closing in August. When will the contract be made public?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Trans Mountain expansion project has significant commercial value. This transaction represents a sound investment opportunity for Canada. With that said, the transaction to purchase these assets will close later this summer and we will make more information available, as appropriate.

Also, the hon. member knows that we have invested $100 million in smart grids, $182 million in energy efficiency buildings, another $182 million in electric vehicles, and $2 billion in a low-carbon fund. The list goes on and on.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles on a point of order.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, in response to my second question, the Minister of Transport said I was spouting nonsense, when the point I was making in my question was based on the facts.

I would like the Minister of Transport to tell me which of my facts are false and which facts he considers nonsense.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member but that sounds like a matter of debate.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for me to table in this House documents that would indicate the cost to the average Canadian family of the Liberal carbon tax. The documents are blacked out, but I would like to table them for the House's edification.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to table the documents?

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, just for clarity in my questions, I did not realize it at the time, but from the answer from the agriculture minister, he obviously thought I was talking about registered seed. I do not know why. However, I was talking about antibiotics in feed, and I just wanted to make that clarification.

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● (1510)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. government House leader if she can let us know what we are going to be doing here tomorrow, and then what else we will doing next week.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, we will continue with the report stage debate on Bill C-69, the environmental assessment act.

Following this, we will turn to Bill C-75, the justice modernization act, and Bill C-59, the national security act.

If time permits, we shall start debate at report stage of Bill C-68, the fisheries act, and Bill C-64 on derelict vessels.

[*Translation*]

Tomorrow morning, we will begin third reading of Bill C-47 on the Arms Trade Treaty. Next Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday are allotted days. Also, pursuant to the Standing Orders, we will be voting on the main estimates Thursday evening.

Next week, priority will be given to the following bills: Bill C-21, an act to amend the Customs Act; Bill C-59, an act respecting national security matters; Bill C-64, the wrecked, abandoned or hazardous vessels act; Bill C-68 on fisheries; and Bill C-69 on environmental assessments.

We also know, however, that the other place should soon be voting on Bill C-45, the cannabis act. If a message is received notifying us of amendments, that will be given priority.

* * *

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

PROCEEDINGS IN HUMA COMMITTEE—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised on May 24, 2018, by the hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove concerning proceedings at the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

I would like to thank the hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove for having raised this matter, as well as the hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster for her comments.

Speaker's Ruling

In raising the matter, the member for Langley—Aldergrove explained that the appearance of three ministers, who were at the committee to discuss the main estimates for the department of Employment and Social Development, was interrupted by a series of votes taking place in the House. According to the member, the chair of the committee had promised that committee members would be able to question the ministers after they returned from voting. However, after the committee meeting resumed and the ministers finished their presentations, the chair adjourned the meeting, leaving committee members unable to put any questions to the ministers. This, the member alleged, constituted a contempt of the House.

[*Translation*]

As I said when the matter was first raised, committees are masters of their own proceedings. The Speaker's jurisdiction does not normally extend into committee matters, unless the committee sees fit to report one to the House. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at pages 152 and 153 states:

> Speakers have consistently ruled that, except in the most extreme situations, they will hear questions of privilege arising from committee proceedings only upon presentation of a report from the committee which deals directly with the matter and not as a question of privilege raised by an individual Member.

Furthermore, on March 23, 2015, my predecessor said at page 12180 of the Debates:

> This is not to suggest that the Chair is left without any discretion to intervene in committee matters but, rather, it acknowledges that such intervention is exceedingly rare and justifiable only in highly exceptional procedural as opposed to political circumstances.

●(1515)

[*English*]

In my consideration of this alleged question of privilege, I assessed whether if this was indeed a highly exceptional procedural matter. Distilled down to its basic elements, it seems to me that this is a dispute as to the procedural correctness of how the meeting was conducted and, as such, is a matter that should be managed by the committee itself.

As an option, the hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove can still raise his grievance with the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. For this reason, I cannot agree that the incident constitutes a prima facie question of privilege.

I thank members for their attention on this matter.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Carleton on May 31, 2018, concerning the alleged intimidation of a potential witness by the office of the Minister of Finance.

I would like to thank the member for raising the matter, as well as the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader for his comments.

According to the member for Carleton, the Canadian Association of Mutual Insurance Companies, CAMIC, received two phone calls from the office of the Minister of Finance, which he claimed were intended to stop them from raising their objections to Bill C-74, either by meeting with parliamentarians or by appearing before committee. He surmised that these comments, which he characterized as threatening, might be why this association did not even express an interest in appearing as a committee witness.

[*Translation*]

In addition to questioning the timeliness of this question of privilege, the parliamentary secretary framed the matter as one of debate and contended that actions of a civil servant have not historically qualified as breaches of privilege.

[*English*]

The issue of timeliness is one that the Chair has raised on several occasions recently since it is a requisite condition that members must heed. In this instance, it is a valid issue to be raised again. This question could have, and should have, been brought to the attention of the House much earlier. The article from *The Globe and Mail*, dated May 15, 2018, in which the member for Carleton is quoted, suggests that he was aware of this matter as early as May 15. Additionally, it could have been raised at any point since May 22, when the House returned from a break week. The fact that the member for Carleton gave notice of his question of privilege a full week prior to actually rising in the House to make his case also suggests that he could have done so earlier.

[*Translation*]

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, third edition, explains at page 145 what is expected of members in this respect, when it states:

> The matter of privilege to be raised in the House must have recently occurred and must call for the immediate action of the House. Therefore, the member must satisfy the Speaker that he or she is bringing the matter to the attention of the House as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the situation.

In the past, Speakers have chosen not to pursue further on a matter when it is not apparent that it is being raised at the earliest practicable time.

[*English*]

In fact, Speaker Sauvé determined, on March 1, 1982, in a ruling found at pages 15473 and 15474 of *Debates*, that a question raised by a member was not a breach of privilege, as it had not been raised at the earliest opportunity. She stated:

> The first problem I have with this question of privilege is that it does not appear to have been raised at the earliest opportunity....
>
> I must therefore decline to accord this matter precedence over the regular business of the House, particularly in view of the fact that it does not appear to have been raised at the earliest opportunity. This requirement is not a mere technicality, but indeed in some respects a test of the validity of the complaint.

Today the Chair can only come to the same conclusion. This matter was clearly not raised at the first opportunity; the member did not meet this requisite condition, and therefore the Chair will not comment further on it.

I thank all hon. members for their attention.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1520)

[*English*]

IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACT

The House resumed from June 6 consideration of Bill C-69, An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster has five minutes remaining in her speech.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to rise again today to finish my remarks. I started them at five minutes to midnight last night, so I am glad that I have this opportunity to continue.

I want to remind my colleagues that Kinder Morgan never asked for a single dollar of taxpayers' money. It asked the government to provide certainty that its pipeline could be built. Even though the Liberals approved the expansion of the Kinder Morgan pipeline, they sat on their hands and did not champion it. Kinder Morgan was not given the certainty it had asked for. Instead, it got delay after delay. That failure led to the nationalization of the pipeline, and as I have said, it has come at a significant cost to Canadian taxpayers.

Of the bailout, Aaron Wudrick, the federal director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, said it is "both a colossal failure of the [Prime Minister's] government to enforce the law of the land, and a massive, unnecessary financial burden on Canadian taxpayers."

Pipeline projects can be built without taxpayer money. The former Conservative government approved 4,500 kilometres of new pipeline through four major pipeline projects.

The role of the government should be to ensure that projects that are scientifically determined to be safe for the environment, and in the interests of Canadians, receive approval. Through low taxes and a clear and less burdensome regulatory system, the government could achieve some success. More than halfway through their mandate, the Liberals have not learned that lesson. That is why Trans Canada pulled out of the energy east pipeline project.

That was not the only energy sector loss. The Liberals' poor management of our energy sector has chased away over $80 billion of investment. As I am sure every member in this place will remember, just recently the Liberal government passed the oil tanker moratorium act through the House. This legislation, when enacted, will prevent an entire region from accessing economic opportunities in the oil and gas sector.

Chris Bloomer, president and CEO of the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association, said, "Projects require clarity and predictability, and once approved should not be subject to costly delay tactics that thwart Canada's economic and social prosperity." It is really quite a simple ask from Canada's energy industry. It wants to know the rules, know that they are fair, and know that they will not change erratically.

Bill C-69 would not provide that assurance to those working in the energy sector. First, it would provide a slew of ministerial and Governor in Council exemptions that could be used to slow down the approval process. It would also add a planning phase to the process, a brand new process that would be an added 180 days.

The legislation we have in front of us does not provide me with any measure of confidence that it would decrease project timelines or improve certainty for investors. Rather, it would do just the opposite. This legislation would not make investment in Canada more appealing. Rather, it would make it more complicated and more uncertain.

Bill C-69 proposes increased consultation and would expand the criteria to be considered in the assessment of a project. It would seek social license, but it would not increase scientific analysis of the project.

Let us not forget the fact that the minister would have a veto right at the end of the planning phase. This would certainly not instill confidence in investors. It would tell potential investors that decisions on the approval of a project could be decided on a political whim.

We have to also remember that this is happening while the United States is cutting regulations and lowering its taxes. Canada has lost significant business investment. We cannot afford the cost of increased regulation and increased uncertainty. This legislation would not strike the appropriate balance between protecting the environment and growing our economy.

This legislation, like the Liberal government's policies, is flawed. It would propose new regulatory burdens that, when combined with other measures the Liberals have introduced, such as the carbon tax, would drive investment away from Canada.

● (1525)

If Canada wants to compete globally, we need to lower taxes and streamline the regulation system. We need a government that works with Canadians and not against them.

Bill C-69 would result in a loss of jobs, a loss of economic growth, and a loss in global competitiveness. I cannot support the Liberal government's continued efforts to undermine Canada's long-term prosperity.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to catch some comments from the hon. member for Carleton on the radio the other night, and it brought up a very clear question about how the Conservative Party would handle a situation like this. I got a very clear message from the member that it would basically use all the constitutional powers of the federal government to simply drive it through, which sends a signal to the provinces about the character of a potential government in dealing with issues on which a province and the federal government may disagree. Therefore, I would ask the hon. member whether she would subscribe to the notion of simply driving it through.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Mr. Speaker, it is quite interesting that I am being asked this question right now, because in Saskatchewan, the province I am from, we have a made-in-Saskatchewan climate plan. It is a plan to tackle climate change. We did that, and the Liberal government will not allow Saskatchewan to do that. Instead, it is forcing the Government of Saskatchewan to tax the people of Saskatchewan, when they do not want that tax. I find that ironic, because I do not see this government respecting provincial jurisdiction whatsoever.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, we are debating Bill C-69, which is an omnibus bill that affects the new Canadian energy regulator, which was the National Energy Board; the Impact Assessment Act, which was the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act; and the navigable waters act. Having practised environmental law for most of my life, I do not suppose she will believe me when I tell her, but I will try to tell her, that this bill is incredibly weak and does nothing to make development more difficult. It cannot possibly drive away investors unless they only want to put their money in countries where environmental assessment meets the minimum standards of rigour that Canada used to have between the early 1970s and 2012.

I do not suppose she is reassured, but I am voting against Bill C-69 because it is absolutely weak. I wonder if she has read it in detail and recognizes that it keeps in place most of what the previous government had done.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Mr. Speaker, I find my colleague's question very interesting because of what just happened with Kinder Morgan. The government made it such an uncertain area of investment that it had to pay off Kinder Morgan to build the pipeline, or else it will not be done. I am not going to accuse the government of not building the pipeline. It has not been done yet. We have not seen anything happen to promote that, except that the government has thrown taxpayers' money at companies that will take that investment elsewhere.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Kinder Morgan, the government has solved a problem that did not exist. It is not that we did not have a company to own the pipeline or a company to build the pipeline. It is that we did not have governmental approvals for the pipeline. Today we still do not have governmental approvals for that pipeline. That is exactly why I suggested that the government should use its constitutional powers to take control of the permitting process for all aspects of the project, which would be to the net benefit of Canada, as is provided for in section 92 of the British North American Act.

The fact that the Liberals have not done that means not only that we might not get the pipeline expansion but that we might be on the hook for billions of dollars for that failure. Could the member comment on whether this nationalization of a 65-year-old pipeline was in the national interest?

● (1530)

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to read something written by a Canadian citizen. It is their opinion of the government buying a pipeline worth $4.5 billion. That person said that governments should not be in the investment business. The government's role is to encourage and create environments for others to take risks, they emphasized. The government should be there to provide a social safety net for the most vulnerable, not investing taxpayer money in projects that private investors already have money for.

I am receiving emails and phone calls from residents in my riding who are very upset that the current government is using their tax dollars to spend on a $4.5-billion pipeline that investors were already willing to do.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill C-69, an act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts. My remarks this afternoon will focus on part 3 of this misguided bill.

Part 3 is the section of the bill that makes amendments to the Navigation Protection Act. This section of the bill continues the Prime Minister and the Liberals' assault on common sense laws and regulations that promote jobs and economic growth. The only people calling for the changes proposed in the bill are those opposed to resource projects that create economic development and jobs. They are representatives of the same people who have been protesting the Trans Mountain pipeline, the pipeline the Liberals recently purchased for $4.5 billion in taxpayers' money.

It is rather ironic that the Liberals are burning the bridge, so to speak, with the very voter pool they had hoped to pacify with the bill.

Bill C-69 proposes to change the name of the Navigation Protection Act to the Canadian navigable waters act. While seemingly cosmetic, this change reflects a substantial refocusing of the act on the protection of waters rather than the protection of navigation.

Canada is a large country, the second largest in the world. In the 1800s, waterways were often the primary means of transporting goods across our vast geography. The legislative forerunners of the Navigation Protection Act were designed to protect the navigability of waterways for the sake of our economy.

With the advent of Canada's rail and road systems, as well as our transportation system, Canada's transportation system has become less reliant on water navigation. However, that said, waterways remain an important element of our transportation system in many regions of the country.

As I said a moment ago, the changes in Bill C-69, including changing the act's name, demonstrate the Liberals' complete disregard for the original intent of the Navigation Protection Act, and instead reflect their misguided attempt to virtue signal in order to obtain the obscure idea of social licence. Without definition or boundaries, social licence is no more real than a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow.

The Liberals' fixation on this abstract idea is costing Canadians dearly. Again, just consider the $4.5 billion, and counting, that the Liberals have spent to buy the old Trans Mountain pipeline. Now consider the substantial changes to the Navigation Protection Act contained within this bill.

The current Navigation Protection Act includes a schedule of waters to which the act applies. This schedule was created by the previous Conservative government because we realized that not every seasonal creek, tiny river, or stream was used for the purpose of commercial navigation. We also realized that these seasonal creeks or tiny rivers were already protected by other environmental legislation and that when economic development was planned on or near them, it was duplicative and redundant to make these projects subject to the NPA when in fact these small bodies of water were not used for navigation.

Our changes were strongly supported by a broad range of stakeholders and organizations across Canada. They ranged from the construction industry, to the resource development industry, to municipalities and their associations. These organizations recognized that Canada needed prudent, careful environmental laws and regulations, but not duplicative ones. They realized that applying the NPA to projects where navigation was not a consideration was a waste of time and money and led to increased project costs.

On this point, the opposition by municipal organizations and the construction industry was highlighted to parliamentarians at the Standing Committee on Transportation, Infrastructure and Communities when we undertook a study in 2016 of the former Conservative government's changes to the NPA. The genesis of that study by the committee was very interesting and should be noted.

● (1535)

What prompted the committee's study of the NPA was twofold. First, I believe there was a misguided eagerness on the part of Liberal and NDP MPs to do the bidding of the Prime Minister, rather than focusing on the real issues, which would have had a more meaningful and positive impact on Canadians and our economy. The committee's study of the NPA was a case of the legislative branch taking its marching orders from the executive branch.

Second, and connected to my first point, the transport, infrastructure and communities committee undertook the study of the NPA as a result of an inadvisable letter from the Minister of Transport, co-authored by the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, which was sent to the chair of the transportation committee. In this letter, the Minister of Transport, in effect, directed the committee to undertake this study to provide political cover for introducing changes to the previous Conservative government's legislation. Add to that the fact that the instructions contained within the Minister of Transport's ministerial mandate letter directed him to reverse the changes that were made when the NPA became law.

By directing the committee to undertake the study, the minister was foisting upon a parliamentary committee an instruction that he, himself, had been given. It is no wonder, then, that the conclusions of the committee study were pre-determined. To this day, I find this invasion by the executive branch into the workings of a committee of the legislative body to be a very egregious act on the part of the Minister of Transport and this Prime Minister.

Getting back to Bill C-69 and the new provisions it contains, if passed, the bill will maintain the schedule of waters to be covered by the bill, but it will change the rules and regulations for any work on any navigable water listed in the schedule. Additionally, the bill will create new rules and regulations that will apply to all navigable waters, not just those listed in the schedule.

When I say "navigable water", it is important to note that this term is code for any body of water or seasonal stream that can float a petroleum-produced canoe or kayak. These new rules include providing an opportunity for the public to express concerns over a work's impact on navigation.

While noble in concept, we all know that this new provision has the potential to be abused by individuals and organizations ideologically opposed to certain projects. This bill is about undoing the good work of our previous Conservative government for spite, rather than implementing policy for the good of the country.

In conclusion, I believe that Bill C-69 is a bad bill and completely unnecessary. While I have only touched on a small part of this bill, I know that its other elements, which my colleague, the member for Abbotsford and others have articulated, will have an equally damaging effect on the Canadian economy and the investment environment in Canada as a whole. This damaging bill is just another piece of bad policy that is causing investment and job creators to look at other countries and/or leave Canada.

It is my sincere hope that the Liberals will reconsider what they are doing to Canada's economy and reputation with misguided pieces of legislation like this one.

● (1540)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the outset of her speech, the member said she believes that legislation, or amendments to legislation, today, in 2018, should reflect the original intent of legislation from over 100 years ago.

I appreciate that original intent is an important component, but as the member knows, society evolves, concepts evolve, and that at the time the original act was passed, the notion of the environment did not exist. If we had spoken to somebody back then about the environment, they would have looked puzzled.

Today the environment does matter. The new bill, in terms of assessing projects, will look at impacts on water levels. As a member of Parliament whose riding went through terrible flooding last spring, I would like to ask the member whether she believes that that added component of looking at impacts on water levels is a good thing?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, the Navigation Protection Act and its predecessors were created to protect navigation, not to protect the environment. We have many other pieces of legislation that protect the environment, including the environment of our lakes, rivers and oceans.

I do not believe I said that the changes to the current act were meant to reflect what was happening when our country became a nation. I was speaking to the Navigation Protection Act and the changes we made in 2012.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I heard my friend's comments loud and clear with respect to the Navigable Waters Protection Act. Canada had the legislation since 1867, originally under our first prime minister. It remained virtually unchanged until the very significant changes in 2012.

My friend and I will disagree. The omnibus budget bill, Bill C-45 in the fall of 2012, really did damage to our ability to protect navigable waters across Canada. This version in Bill C-69 represents a real improvement. The tragedy is that although the Minister of Transport has done a really good job in repairing that damage, because the impact assessment law does not create a requirement for a review of permits being given by the Minister of Transport, the whole system remains rather shattered, as it was by the budget bill and Bill C-38.

Has she looked at the definition and not recognized that this new definition in Bill C-69 does in fact take into account that waterways that can be used only part of the year and are not actually used for human navigation will not trigger any governmental involvement in navigable waters?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, we would have noted this. A schedule was put in place when the previous government made changes to the act. What the current government has done is kept the schedule and has now indicated that every other waterway will also be subject to the same regulations as the waterways on the schedule. Therefore, it begs the question as to why we have a schedule if it will encompass every waterway in the country.

I will quote what my colleague, who was the lead on this bill made, had to say: "The proposed Impact Assessment Act adds a new planning phase that extends consultations and provides the Minister with the power to kill a project before it has been evaluated based on science." It gives the minister the discretion to add whatever waterways to the schedule even though it seems a little redundant should he choose to use that discretion.

● (1545)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have heard from many farmers and ranchers in rural Canada about the changes in Bill C-69 and the impact they will have, especially when it comes to working on their own land. When they are working in spring runoff areas, little waterways and ditches, they will be forced to work with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, even if someone cannot even get a raft or a balloon down that waterway. They are going to be treated like the last pirate of Saskatchewan is going to be sailing down the plain in his ship. It is going to cause a lot of burden and red tape for these farmers when they are trying to produce food and work on their land.

Could my colleague talk about the impact the changes in Bill C-69 will have on the agriculture sector?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the very good work he does on behalf of our producers and agriculture across our country.

When I made my remarks, I commented that it was important to note that "navigable water" was a code for any body of water or seasonal stream that could float a canoe or a kayak. I think that is very concerning to farmers across our country, certainly in Saskatchewan.

We heard from SARM when we were studying the bill at committee. It was deeply concerned about the implications it would have for farmers and municipalities to do the work they needed to do in order to continue to provide for Canadians and to provide services to the people they represented.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have this opportunity to join the debate on Bill C-69. It is an opportunity that unfortunately many colleagues in the House will not be able to have. We are currently debating it under time allocation, so we have a limit of five hours to debate it.

I want to walk the House through a little history lesson.

If we go back to the 2015 election, the Liberals, particularly the Prime Minister, made a lot of promises during that campaign. One of them was a repeated promise that if the Liberals were elected, they would immediately restore a strengthened federal environmental assessment process. They made a commitment that they would not approve any projects without first enacting that strengthened assessment process to ensure decisions were based on science, facts, and evidence, and that they would serve the public interest.

In fact, the Prime Minister made a visit to British Columbia. He came to Vancouver Island to the community of Esquimalt on August 20, 2015. People will know Esquimalt, because that is the home of the main Pacific naval base for Canada. He was asked specifically about the promise in the context of Kinder Morgan. He said, quite clearly, that the Kinder Morgan pipeline review process would have to be redone under stronger and more credible rules.

However, what we have before us today, with Bill C-69, is a gargantuan bill, clocking in at 364 pages. It is too little too late, because we are now debating a bill after the government has approved Kinder Morgan and after it has announced the purchase of the pipeline.

The bill comes to us roughly 28 months since the Liberals were elected. I have heard other members of Parliament express in this place that the bill should have gone to three separate committees. It should have gone to the transport committee, the natural resources committee, and the environment committee so each of those collective bodies, with the experience and knowledge that members attain while working on them, could have studied the constituent parts and called forth the appropriate witnesses.

Instead, one committee was entrusted to this monumental task, this herculean task. I know the efforts of the member for Edmonton Strathcona in listening to the evidence and in trying to put forward amendments to see that the bill lived up to the promises the Liberal government had made. Unfortunately, due to the time constraints and the Liberal members on the committee not really listening to her, most of those amendments were defeated, and here we are at the report stage of the bill.

I also want to go back to the time before Bill C-69 was introduced. The Liberals keep on saying that Kinder Morgan did go through a renewed review process. Well, let us just examine what they in fact set up.

The Liberals had set up what was known as a "ministerial review panel". In fact, that panel admitted that it lacked the time, the technical expertise, and the resources to fill the gaps in the National Energy Board process. It ended up with little more than questions that remained unanswered. They kept no public records of hearings, admitted that the meetings were hastily organized, and confirmed that they had a serious lack of public confidence in the National Energy Board and its recommendations.

I attended one of those meetings when it came to Victoria. I remember the room unanimously coming out against Kinder Morgan. It was kind of a slapdash piece of work.

Despite all of the setbacks of the ministerial review panel, its members still came out and acknowledged that Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline proposals could not proceed without a serious reassessment of its impacts on climate change commitments, indigenous rights, and marine mammal safety. Therefore, they, in a sense, were acknowledging the huge problems that existed with this project.

The Liberals keep on openly wondering why there is such passionate opposition to this project, specifically in British Columbia where the risks are very much concentrated. It is because people did not have faith in the previous process. Many of them were lured to vote Liberal. They had hoped that the new Liberal government would actually live up to its promises.

• (1550)

Instead what they got was a ministerial review panel, judgment passed by the Liberal government before the facts, and now this bill, Bill C-69, which still has many problematic elements. One of the big ones is that the Minister of Environment will still have an arbitrary right to monitor environmental projects. It leaves them open to political influences instead of scientific evidence.

Governments come and go. We may have an environment minister in one government whom the public can trust and know that the person's heart is in the right place, but if a new government comes in that has completely different leanings and gives that kind of power to ministers, it can sway its decisions according to which way the political winds blow. That is not the way to enact strong, scientific, consensus-based decision-making.

I want to start framing this debate a bit more in the context of Kinder Morgan and the very fact that the government has made promises to get rid of subsidies to the oil and gas sector, that we are now last in the G7, and that the government has tried to strive to a 2025 goal.

The Liberals have paid $4.5 billion for a 65-year-old pipeline, one that exports diluted bitumen, and this is just the cost of the existing infrastructure and not of anything that will come from it. I hear members from all sides talking about a national energy strategy, but this pipeline serves foreign interests. It is not accumulating the best value for our product.

Diluted bitumen is the lowest grade of crude we can export. That is why it fetches the lowest prices. Expanding Kinder Morgan's capacity will not change the price. I see no incentive and I have seen no evidence that customers will be willing to pay more for the same product just because we can ship more volume. The existing pipeline exports 99% of it to California, so I would like to see evidence of all the buyers from Asia lining up at the door. They are currently not buying what Kinder Morgan is exporting today.

The Liberals like to use a favourite phrase that the environment and the economy go hand in hand. There are a few things that are wrong with this. It supposes that the environment and the economy are equal partners. That is not the case. I would argue that there is a relationship, but the economy is very much the junior partner. When we start affecting our environment, when we start polluting the waterways, and we see the effects of climate change, the economic ravages that can have far outweigh any of the benefits we can get.

There are economic opportunities in keeping in line with our environmental goals if we start to make the right investments into renewable energy. We have to see the way the world is going. This is 2018, and there is a trend. I want our country to take advantage of the economic opportunities of the 21st century economy, not invest in something that rightfully belongs in the 20th century.

Along the way, we have to be speaking to current energy workers. We have to ensure they come along with us. Everyone acknowledges that the oil sands will not stop production tomorrow, but we need to have a plan where we talk about the just transition of those workers to bring them with us into the new energy economy, so Canada is best placed for the 21st century.

I also want to talk about the Liberals' vote for Bill C-262 last week and how little those commitments mean this week.

The member for Edmonton Strathcona tried repeatedly, both at committee and now at report stage, to insert language into Bill C-69 that would live up to what Bill C-262 would do. Bill C-262 seeks to bring the laws of Canada into harmony with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. If we look at all the report stage motions, we can see that the member for Edmonton Strathcona has tried to insert language in there that acknowledges the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and acknowledges the Constitution Act, 1982 and all of our commitments. I have been questioning Liberals repeatedly on this. Will they at least have some consistency and vote in support of those amendments, following their support for Bill C-262?

This bill is too little too late. There are gaps in it that we could drive a bus through. While we appreciate some elements of the bill, we have to look at the whole thing.

• (1555)

When it is this large, there are just far too many negatives. They outweigh the positives. That is why the NDP is going to withhold its support for the bill. We were hoping for a lot more, and frankly, so were the Canadian people.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the member's speech. He delivered it with great clarity.

It is often very difficult to ascertain exactly what subsidies to the fossil fuel industry are, because in some cases investments made with the help of government are aimed at greening that industry. That counts as support, I suppose, for a greener economy. However, often when people talk about the way we subsidize the fossil fuel industry, what they mean is that the industry is not paying for the externalities, for the contributions it makes to greenhouse gas emissions. Would the member not agree that the government's intent to place a price on carbon across the country is one way of eliminating probably the most important fossil fuel industry, which is the fact that we do not really yet have a polluter pay principle when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my Liberal colleague across the way that we need to put a price on pollution. That is why, when we were debating Bill C-74, we were very much in support of separating the new carbon tax act out of that bill so it could be properly studied at its own committee. That way, the government could have done the House a service in bringing forward the appropriate witnesses who could have laid clearly on the table the evidence that this approach works.

My Conservative colleagues also have concerns that need to be addressed. I very much acknowledge that there are farmers and certain low-income individuals and industries that are still very fossil fuel dependent, so we need to construct the tax in a way that acknowledges the current fossil fuel users and helps them transition out of that situation. We need to structure the tax in a way that provides some benefit to low-income people while in the overall picture we try to transition our country to a fossil fuel-free future.

● (1600)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for my colleague. We work very well together on the agriculture committee. He touched on something when he pointed out that although we are talking about Bill C-69, this really is about a larger narrative.

The government is making making significant decisions that will impact almost every aspect of our economy, whether it is energy, farming, ranching, or small business. As we have seen over the last few days, and certainly over the last couple of weeks, the Liberals are trying to ram these decisions through with little to no consultation either from members or from Canadians who are going to be impacted by this decision.

I would like my colleague to talk about some of the things he is hearing in his constituency about the impact, or about the frustration from his residents as a result of the decisions being made by the Liberal government with no consultation with Canadians.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend from Foothills. I enjoy working with him as well. I return the compliment.

When we look at how the Liberal government has treated the parliamentary process over the last few weeks, it has again lived up to another broken promise. The Liberal government came to power with a promise to respect how Parliament works, thus ensuring that members of the opposition and the constituents we represent would get to raise our voices. There has been increasing use of time allocation on huge bills, including the justice reform bill, a democratic reform bill, and an environmental assessment review bill. Limiting debate to five hours really does a disservice not only to us but to the Canadian public we represent.

The Liberals were elected with 39% of the vote. We in the opposition collectively represent 61% of Canadians. They deserve to have their voices heard, and we should not be paying the price for the Liberals' mismanagement of the parliamentary calendar over the last few months.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many people in Vancouver Kingsway have great concerns about the government's purchase of the Kinder Morgan pipeline with $4.5 billion of their money. We know as well that the pipeline itself will cost at least another $7.5 billion to build and another $3 billion in indemnities. We are talking about using at least $15 billion of taxpayer dollars to build expanded fossil fuel infrastructure.

If Canada has to meet our Paris Agreement commitments and if our job is to reduce fossil fuel emissions and greenhouse gas emissions, can the member square that idea with the notion of expanding fossil fuel infrastructure by using the Kinder Morgan pipeline to triple bitumen exports through the port of Vancouver? Also, could he comment briefly on whether he thinks it is reasonable for the government to be in its third year of government and still not have any price on pollution?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, I think my friend from Vancouver Kingsway has hit on the point: This decision to expand Kinder Morgan makes a mockery of the government's climate change commitments if we look at some of the key facts and figures associated with climate change and the economic costs that will come to Canada.

We are seeing increased natural disasters, flooding, droughts, forest fires. These all have very real impacts on the Canadian economy. Over the next few decades, they will far outweigh the kinds of economic impacts anyone hopes to gain from approving projects like this. I would argue that the greatest economic input comes from looking ahead to the end of the 21st century and where we want Canada to be at that point and starting to invest in those technologies today.

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to debate Bill C-69.

It is obvious that Bill C-69 would ensure that major private sector pipelines will never see the light of day. This Liberal Bill C-69 will forever be known as a black death to the oil and gas sector, killing jobs from coast to coast to coast. The Liberal government has enacted a series of anti-resource policies and has sent signals that discourage economic growth. The hikes in tax rates, increased capital gains taxes, which entrepreneurs are averse to, and the carbon tax all affect investment in Canada. We have witnessed that Liberal policies and lack of action on the energy file have chased over $80 billion out of our country, taking with them hundreds of thousands of jobs.

When I was first elected, anyone across the country who was willing to work could find a job in Alberta. Those willing to work hard, often more than 40 hours a week, could support their families, send their kids for post-secondary education, and still save for the future. Small businesses across Alberta were also booming from the economic activity that the industry brought into almost every town and community in the province. That is not the case today. An oil crash later, a provincial government change, and a federal government change have all Albertans concerned for their future.

The global price of oil will always fluctuate, but what many Canadians do not know is that we do not receive the price per barrel that is commonly reported. The price reported is the North American benchmark, West Texas Intermediate. Our oil is traded as Western Canadian Select. The difference between the two prices is about $34 a barrel, on average. The good news is that pipelines can help to close that gap in prices. The more access we have to markets other than the United States, the better the deal we can obtain.

Instead of supporting the building of these pipelines, the Liberal government has introduced regulation after regulation to cripple the industry and deter investment. Today we are talking about the unpopular move that the Liberal government has struck against the west and our oil industry by robbing the National Energy Board of most of its powers through the creation of the Canadian energy regulator.

The National Energy Board has served as a world-class regulator for the natural resource sector since its creation in 1959. Since then, it has reviewed and approved major energy projects across Canada. Over the last decade, the NEB has approved the pipelines Alberta desperately needs, which made it a target for political interference. When the Liberal government took power, the natural resource minister's mandate letter called on him to "Modernize the National Energy Board to ensure that its composition reflects regional views and has sufficient expertise in fields such as environmental science, community development, and Indigenous traditional knowledge."

While the government believes Bill C-69 would complete this mandate, I would like to cover how this bill would drive investment out of Canada.

One of the changes the bill would bring in is the establishment of timelines. The government claims that there will be timelines of 450 days for major projects and 300 days for minor projects, respectively, pursuant to subclauses 183(4) and 214(4). While many Conservatives are in favour of timelines for projects, the devil is in the details, and unfortunately we did not have time or enough witnesses at our round tables to go over these details. The application process can be dragged out, and that will not be considered in the timelines. The lead commissioner will be given the ability to exclude time. Lastly and most importantly, the minister can approve or deny an application before it even gets to the assessment phase. We only have to look at the cancelled northern gateway pipeline to see that the government has no problem putting national interests on hold and dismissing a pipeline for political reasons.

I am also concerned about the changes to the NEB standing test. Currently, individuals and organizations directly affected by the project or capable of providing valuable knowledge are heard by the National Energy Board. The new rules would allow anyone to participate and be heard. This would ensure that groups who oppose all energy projects across Canada will be given a bigger voice. Groups outside of Canada will be given a voice as well, and they do not have our best interests at heart.

I can only imagine what our global competitors think of this legislation. It would give them the opportunity to fund groups that will oppose every project that has the ability to threaten their market share. To think that this will not occur in the future is foolish and short-sighted.

● (1605)

Briefly, I would like to bring your attention to the projects that have died under the Liberals' watch.

The Prime Minister imposed offshore drilling bans in the Northwest Territories without notice to the territorial governments, which killed exploration and future development, and the Petronas-backed NorthWest LNG megaproject on the west coast was cancelled. The Liberal government has ever-changing policies and roadblocks, which led to the cancellation of energy east. The Liberals also cancelled the Conservative-approved pipeline project known as the northern gateway, which would have brought our oil to tidewater. They legislated the northern B.C. coastline tanker ban, which will ensure projects like the northern gateway and Eagle Spirit will never be possible.

In addition, many Canadians and experts are concerned over the purchase of a 65-year-old pipeline at twice its book value, but the biggest concern is the current condition of the pipeline.

Some of the questions I have are these: What is the life expectancy of the 65-year-old pipeline? What is the projected cost of the maintenance and upgrade of the 65-year-old infrastructure? Will the newly created crown corporation be self-sufficient or end up like the CBC, dependent on taxpayer handouts? Will the construction of the twinning of the pipeline be subject to Bill C-69? Did the government assume all liability from Kinder Morgan, including liabilities from the past?

We should all recognize that the natural resource sector has brought tremendous wealth to my riding, all of Alberta, and Canada. The oil sands alone have brought $7.4 billion to the Canadian economy outside of Alberta: $3.9 billion to Ontario, $1.3 billion to British Columbia, $1.2 billion to Quebec, $333 million to Newfoundland, $143 million to Manitoba, $142 million to Saskatchewan, $96.7 million to Nova Scotia, $50.8 million to New Brunswick, $11.4 million to the Northwest Territories, $6.3 million to Prince Edward Island, $1.6 million to Yukon, and the list goes on. These figures include everything from especially made overalls to high technology for reducing global emissions.

Members need to consider that if we keep our resources in the ground, as environmentalist David Suzuki wants us to do, we are not saving the environment; we are just moving resource development to countries around the world that have lower safety standards and lower environmental protections. I believe that if resources are needed, it is better that they come from here and not from human rights abusers and dictators.

I know that many members of Parliament have voted for regulations of every type and will continue to do so. What they need to consider before voting on this bill is that we are part of a global market. Right now we are competing with countries across the world to sell our goods and attract investment.

We only need to look across the border to see a government intent on bringing in billions of dollars of investments and the jobs that come with them. Since taking office, the Trump administration has given the energy industry a tremendous amount of confidence to invest by cutting regulations and taxes. Future natural resource jobs in my riding, in Alberta, and across Canada are at stake if this bill passes, and that is why my Conservative colleagues and I stand against this bill.

● (1610)

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from my friend from Fort McMurray—Cold Lake. I am a little puzzled, and I wonder if he could share with us the current numbers for employment and business activity.

In Hamilton, we are very proud to have one of the lowest unemployment rates of all Canadian cities, at 4.2%, and we have two new orders of 1,000 grain cars each from CN and CP at the railcar facility in my riding. Those grain cars will be applied to the economy of the west.

I have limited knowledge of northern B.C., and my friend will know why. The unemployment rate in the cities I have some familiarity with dropped drastically over the past year or so, to half of what it was. Could my friend be clear on just what the employment activity is like in the Fort McMurray—Cold Lake area?

● (1615)

Mr. David Yurdiga: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you which industries are doing great and flourishing. The Food Bank is up 340%, which is wonderful. We have overcrowded homeless shelters. We have families living in cars because they cannot afford their mortgages. That is our reality. Just because your region is doing well, that does not mean mine is—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: We sometimes switch from a third person to a second person scenario. I do try to stay alert to those times when the "you" word is used in a rhetorical sense, as opposed to when it is directed to a particular member. Having said that, I do try to let members finish their thought, and if I sense that an intervention is required, I will do that.

The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

Mr. David Yurdiga: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I wanted to differentiate between two regions. If members want to take issue with it, they can send me an email. I would appreciate that.

However, I am looking at businesses shutting their doors. We have businesses that base their business model on certain criteria that are not there any longer. Our economy in Fort McMurray—Cold Lake is suffering. We have to look at getting our product to market, and the pipeline is very important. It is unfortunate, but I believe we are going to have ribbon-cutting and then a new study, and nothing is going to happen for years.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the member wants to talk about the economy and jobs, let us do that. It is estimated that governments around the world will invest $5,000 billion in clean, renewable energy by 2030. That translates into many good and well-paid jobs.

In the meantime, what is Canada investing in? We just invested $4.5 billion in a pipeline. We are investing in non-renewable energy, dirty energy, with existing jobs that unfortunately will not last very long.

Does my colleague not think that we should instead have a greater vision, one that will have more longer term benefits for the people of his region, and not the short-sighted vision of investing in non-renewable energy?

[*English*]

Mr. David Yurdiga: Mr. Speaker, why can green energy and carbon-related energy not go hand in hand? Eventually, one industry will overtake the other, but it is going to take time. Currently, there is a great demand for oil. We have abundant oil. It is a very important part of our economy. Let us invest in both.

I do not believe that taxpayers should be on the hook to get this done. We have private corporations willing to put the pipeline in, but the Liberal government did nothing for a long time, not clearing the way for the private sector to get this pipeline constructed.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise here today to speak to Bill C-69, one of the most important attempts to modernize our environmental protection laws in Canada.

In large part, I think it was meant to deal with some of the actions of the Conservative government, which gutted a lot of our environmental protection laws in the previous Parliament through changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act, the Fisheries Act, et cetera. We dealt with fisheries in Bill C-68, but Bill C-69 is an answer to try to fix some of the other acts that were radically changed by the previous government.

I have to say, off the top, how disappointed I am that the government not only brought in this bill as an omnibus bill, a huge bill, well over 300 pages long, but it moved time allocation in the first debate after only two hours. It moved time allocation on the bill yesterday as well. This is a bill that really should get fulsome debate. I am disappointed that not only did the government move time allocation, but it took so long to bring in this bill.

The NDP originally asked the Speaker to rule this an omnibus bill so that we could deal with it separately. The government agreed that we could vote on the navigable waters section separately. We also asked that the bill be split up for committee study. The first section, on the impact assessment, is ideally suited for study by the environment committee. The central part, which deals with the National Energy Board and the Canadian energy regulator, belongs with the natural resources committee. The navigation protection section, obviously, should have gone to the transport committee.

That division of labour would have provided for a thorough and efficient study. Instead, the whole bill was thrust onto the environment committee, where, with impossible deadlines, many important witnesses could not testify. I was contacted early on by a consortium of Canadian scientists who had studied this and wanted to present evidence before the committee. This was not a single scientist; these were a lot of the important environment scientists in Canada. They were denied access to the committee simply because, I imagine, there were too many witnesses trying to testify before the committee in those tight timelines.

At committee, the NDP submitted over 100 amendments, none of which were accepted. Tellingly, the government submitted over 100 amendments of its own. This tells me that the legislation was clearly rushed into the House and should have been written with more care.

The Liberals are hashtagging this bill #BetterRules, but the Canadian Environmental Law Association, the legal experts who arguably know more about this subject than most Canadians and most politicians, has said that this legislation in neither better, nor rules.

I will quote from a briefing note prepared by Richard Lindgren of the Canadian Environmental Law Association:

> [T]he IAA is not demonstrably "better" than CEAA 2012. To the contrary, the IAA replicates many of the same significant flaws and weaknesses found within the widely discredited CEAA 2012....
>
> [T]he IAA does not establish a concise rules-based regime that provides clarity, consistency, and accountability during the information-gathering and decision-making process established under the Act. Instead, the key stages of the proposed impact assessment process are subject to considerable (if not excessive) discretion enjoyed by various decision-makers under the IAA.
>
> At the most fundamental level, for example, it currently remains unclear which projects will actually be subject to the IAA.... [It] contains no benchmarks or criteria to provide direction on the type, scale, or potential effects of projects that should be designated under the new law.

I would like to spend a little while speaking more to the second part of the bill, the energy regulator section.

This section disbands the National Energy Board and creates a new but rather similar body called the Canadian energy regulator. The section opens with a preamble and a statement of purpose. Surprisingly, in this day and age of a brave new world of energy, neither makes reference to linkages between energy and climate. In fact, there is no mention at all of climate in this entire section.

● (1620)

Much of the public work of the old NEB was about regulating pipelines. One could easily come to the conclusion that this is a case of closing the barn door after the horses have left, since it seems unlikely that the new regulator will ever have to review an application for a major new oil pipeline.

The Minister of Natural Resources has risen countless times in this place declaring that the government has restored confidence in the energy regulation system, and that is why the Kinder Morgan pipeline can be built. Unfortunately, he is deeply misinformed.

A couple of months ago, I met with Dr. Monica Gattinger of the Positive Energy group at the University of Ottawa, who studies this very issue of public confidence in energy issues, and Nik Nanos, whose polling firm had asked Canadians about that confidence. Perhaps not surprisingly, Mr. Nanos found that public confidence in the Canadian energy regulation system was at an all-time low. If we thought it was low during the Harper government, it has continued to decline, and now only 2% of Canadians have strong confidence in the energy regulation system. That lack of confidence is shared by members of the public on both sides of the issue: it is lowest in both Alberta and British Columbia. It results in situations like the Kinder Morgan impasse. I should mention that the last time I heard the minister speak on this subject, he did admit that confidence was suddenly a problem in this area.

The Liberals promised during the last election to put the Kinder Morgan proposal through a new, stronger review system, but instead sent a three-member ministerial panel on a quick tour along the pipeline route, giving communities, first nations, governments, and the concerned public almost no advance warning to prepare their presentations. No record was made of the proceedings.

Despite the serious shortcomings of this process, the panel came up with six questions that it said the government would have to answer before making its decision about Kinder Morgan. I will mention only the first three.

First, can the construction of the Trans Mountain expansion be reconciled with Canada's climate commitments?

Second, how can pipeline projects be properly assessed in the absence of a comprehensive national energy strategy?

Third, how can the review of this pipeline project be squared with the government's commitment to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples?

I would suggest that none of these questions was answered, even in part, before the government made its decision to approve the Kinder Morgan expansion, and none of them were answered before the government bought the pipeline, which was actually the old pipeline. This leaves a lot of questions about how the government is to regulate itself in getting that pipeline built.

Amazingly, none of those questions are properly answered in the legislation before us, which comes two years after the Kinder Morgan decision. After the government has accepted Bill C-262, which calls for government legislation to be consistent with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, there is no mention of this in the body of Bill C-69. Only after much pressure did the government agree to put it in the preamble, where it would have no legal effect.

We need to restore the confidence of Canadians in our energy regulatory system and in our environmental impact processes. Without that confidence, it will be increasingly difficult for Canadian companies to develop our natural resources, which are at the heart of our national economy.

The Liberals continue to pretend they are doing good, but they are all talk and no action, or as we say in the west, all hat and no cattle. We need bold action to build a new regulatory system that gives voice to all concerned Canadians.

●(1625)

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was listening carefully to what my hon. colleague was saying. It raises the question of how we go forward. Clearly, the intent of the work that was done, partially in the committee on which I sit, was to try to improve public confidence and strike a balance between what the Conservatives had tried to do and had not done very well, and what was necessarily needed.

If we were to follow what we have heard from the NDP so far, would we basically be what I would call a banana republic—i.e., build absolutely nothing, absolutely nowhere, at any time, because the hurdles the member suggests we would have to clear in order to build something like a pipeline would be impossible?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, let us go back to the polling done by Positive Energy. It found that Canadians have very low confidence. Nanos Research found that Canadians felt that the way to move forward was to listen to first nations peoples and to communities. We have to listen to those people and put their messages into our decisions, and that will restore Canadians' confidence.

For instance, a lot of people across the country are concerned about Kinder Morgan and how it squares with our climate action plan. The government talks a good talk about taking action on climate change, but in reality it could move forward much more boldly. It could have put that $4.5 billion into climate action. A lot of Canadians would have more confidence in the oil and gas industry if they knew it were squared with our climate action. That is the way we have to go.

●(1630)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, as much as I want to join in the conversation and keep discussing climate, in looking at Bill C-69 I really want to make a point and ask the hon. member for his commentary.

We had an expert panel on EA. The government spent over $1 million to get its advice, and that advice was very clear: the projects subject to review must include much more than the large controversial projects, and we must ensure that all areas of federal jurisdiction are covered. Smaller projects can do serious environmental damage. I want to ask my hon. colleague from South Okanagan—West Kootenay about this, as he has an extensive scientific background. Smaller projects are not going to be caught at all by Bill C-69.

This is about the review of a couple of dozen projects a year, all big ones. That is a fatal mistake for a federal government to make. It will be fatal to our environment. Smaller projects can destroy a species and wipe out a key ecosystem, and we will never even know about it. That is what I would like to ask my hon. colleague to comment on.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government did a lot of consultation on this legislation, and that is a good thing, I suppose. It did delay the introduction of the bill. As the member said, the advice from all that consultation was largely ignored. This kind of action does not help to gain public confidence in our regulatory systems or in our impact assessments.

I hear complaints from industry about some industries being subject far more often to these impact assessments, the mining industry especially, than other industries, like the oil and gas industry, which is largely exempt. That is how we sow the seeds of discontent on many sides.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, earlier, in my question to a Conservative member from Cold Lake, I stated that billions and billions of dollars are being invested in renewable energy around the world and those investments are creating good jobs. In Canada, however, we are still investing in non-renewable energy such as petroleum. Then my colleague asked why can we not invest in both.

I will put that question to my NDP colleague: why should we not invest in both?

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, we are going to invest in both, to some extent, but if we are going to put up government investment, we should invest for the future. We just bought a pipeline for $4.5 billion. Pipelines are infrastructure and they are meant to last for as long as 50 years.

We should have invested in the energy of the future, in renewable energies. We agreed on the world stage to stop subsidizing the oil and gas industry, to stop subsidizing the fossil fuel industry, and yet Canada has become the biggest world subsidizer of fossil fuel.

We are moving entirely in the wrong direction.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood, Justice; the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, Child Care; and the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Foreign Affairs.

[*Translation*]

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a first for me. I am using my tablet to deliver my speech. We all need to row in the same direction, and every Canadian must be part of the effort to protect our planet. Today I am pleased to rise to debate Bill C-69, an act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

We believe in taking action and building on what we have already done to ensure that Canada remains an environmental leader. Those of us on this side of the House believe that. As I often say, the Liberal Party likes labelling the Conservative Party as anti-environment. Nothing could be further from the truth. I will keep saying that as long as the Liberals keep slapping a label on us that in no way reflects how hard Conservative men and women are working for the environment.

My Green Party colleague called this bill incredibly weak earlier today. This, from a party whose primary focus is the environment. I find this surprising coming from that member, but I completely agree with her. I agree that this massive bill is weak and unacceptable, and it does not meet the objective of protecting the environment for our children and grandchildren.

I am a member of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, and I want to work. This committee has good intentions, and we would like to implement measures to improve the environment. However, I would guess that this government probably forced the chair, who is from the governing party, to pressure the committee to introduce a bill quickly. This is irresponsible.

It is irresponsible because the environment is important to all Canadians and to the members of the Conservative Party of Canada. These kinds of actions are unacceptable.

I will explain what happened in committee. We received 150 briefs totalling 2,250 pages within a month and a half. Fifty organizations appeared before the committee, 100 were not able to appear but submitted briefs, and 400 amendments were moved, including about 100 by the Liberal Party of Canada.

I would like to point out that, just like all Canadians, all MPs are human beings. If we want to do a good job, we need time to do research and to read, so that we are not saying just anything. We have to be rigorous and conscientious. If this government really intended to put together something to protect the environment, it would not have acted this way.

On another matter, in the 2015 election campaign, the Liberal Party of Canada had this to say on page 39 of its platform:

> Canadians want a government they can trust to protect the environment and grow the economy. Stephen Harper has done neither. Our plan will deliver the economic growth and jobs Canadians need, and leave to our children and grandchildren a country even more beautiful, more sustainable, and more prosperous than the one we have now.

● (1635)

It seems important to them to talk about Stephen Harper, who was our prime minister and someone I am very proud of. What was our economy like when the Liberal government took over? It was doing very well. We introduced a balanced budget in 2015, and we left the Liberals with the tools they needed to keep it going, but this spendthrift government managed to create a structural deficit.

The 2019 election cannot come soon enough. This government is going to run a deficit of over $80 billion during its term, so let us hurry up and put the Conservatives back in power so that we can provide sound economic management.

With regard to the previous Conservative government's supposed failure, as I mentioned, here are some of the practical measures that it put in place. The Liberals like to say that we are anti-environment, but that is completely false. I will set out the facts and give concrete examples.

We created the clean air regulatory agenda. We established new standards to reduce car and light truck emissions. We established new standards to reduce emissions from heavy-duty vehicles and their engines. We proposed regulations to align ourselves with the U.S. Working Group III standards for vehicle emissions and sulphur in gasoline. We sought to limit HFCs, black carbon, and methane. We established new rules to reduce emissions from carbon-based electricity generation. We implemented measures to support the development of carbon capture technologies. We implemented measures to support the development of alternative energy sources. We enhanced the government's annual report on the main environmental indicators, including greenhouse gases. We, the big bad conservatives, even abolished tax breaks for the oil sands. In 2007, we invested $1.5 billion in the ecotrust program. It was not a centralist program like the Liberals tend to introduce. Rather, it was a program that worked well with the provinces.

Do you know who sang our praises? Greenpeace, that is who. Wow. We must not be as bad as all that when it comes to the environment. Maybe someday the Liberals will realize that we Conservatives are not here to destroy the planet.

I would like to point out that I, a Conservative MP, established a circular economy committee in my riding of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier. Why would I waste time doing that if I were anti-environment? That is real action. In my view, and in the view of all the witnesses I had the privilege of hearing at the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, Bill C-69 is unacceptable. The witnesses told me and the rest of the committee that this bill is nothing but the usual Liberal window dressing.

I am obliged to say that I personally, along with the other members of the Conservative Party, cannot accept this bill. We want to move things forward, but the government across the aisle does not.

We are willing and able to contribute and help the people across the aisle implement proactive, productive, efficient, and rigorous measures. However, it takes time to do that. Let us give ourselves the tools we need to respect the environment instead of defiling it. Let us implement a process that will protect the environment.

In their electoral platform, the Liberals said they wanted to leave a legacy for our children and grandchildren. First of all, environmentally speaking, this bill accomplishes nothing. Secondly, financially speaking, we are going to mortgage the lives of our children and grandchildren. That is unacceptable.

On that note, I know my time is running out. I am now ready to take questions from my colleagues here in the wonderful House of Commons.

● (1640)

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his fine speech. He is always so full of energy and enthusiasm. He had an opportunity to talk about what he sees as positive things that happened under the Conservative government. I work with him on the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, and we have a good rapport. However, we do not agree on the ideology and key principles that separate the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party.

Canadians are very smart, and they saw how the Conservatives work. One thing Canadians really wanted was a pipeline to transport our oil from its source to markets all over the world. Since we came to power, the Conservatives have been asking us incessantly to guarantee a way to get our oil to market. They were in power for 10 years and did not build a single kilometre of pipeline.

Can my colleague tell us why the Conservatives were unable to solve this problem for 10 years?

Perhaps he should be congratulating us on ensuring the success of this major project while also making changes to protect the environment.

● (1645)

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my excellent colleague from Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, whom I like as a person. We have the privilege of sitting together on the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie. He is quite a character, and we get along well because we are both very expressive.

What he needs to understand is that we left private enterprise to do its job. We put the necessary measures in place so that oil companies could make investments. We do not believe that the party in power promised voters during the election that it would nationalize the oil sector.

The Liberals claim to have created jobs. They did not create any jobs, they added something that already existed. They merely protected jobs. Instead of investing $4.5 billion in a pipeline, I would have liked them to invest in sustainable development, innovation, and green technologies. That $4.5 billion is now stuck in a pipeline.

To me it is unacceptable to invest in something that has no added value. Let us not forget that the second pipeline that is supposed to run alongside the Trans Mountain pipeline has not yet been built.

My colleague needs to understand that it makes no sense to invest $4.5 billion in this pipeline.

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is good to hear my colleague's very passionate speech about the environment.

In the previous government, the Conservatives took away the final say in the decision-making process on these projects from the regulator, the National Energy Board, and gave it to cabinet. Bill C-69 would entrench that in law, and would expand it. The minister would have tremendous discretion, throughout this document, at every step of the regulatory process. Does he agree with that decision to give the minister so much discretion?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from South Okanagan—West Kootenay for his question. We had breakfast together this morning to talk about an environmental issue, and it was great. We were invited by people who care about the environment.

The committee was told that this bill is worthless and will not improve the process. I have to tell my colleague that I agree with him. This bill accomplishes nothing and gives the Minister of Environment even more powers. She has final say, but her Liberal buddies and the government will be giving her instructions to approve a pipeline project or other environmental project.

[*English*]

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately it is not an honour for me to rise to speak to Bill C-69, which would create some burdensome regulation and red tape and add additional uncertainty to our natural resource sector.

Over the last few months, we have seen the impact the policies of the Liberal government on this industry and the jobs that go with it.

Bill C-69 has not even gone through the House yet, has not been given third reading, but we have already seen the ramifications of it. The private sector has seen the writing on the wall and is divesting itself of their interests in Canada: Statoil, Shell, BP, and certainly Kinder Morgan, which has made a substantial profit from the Canadian taxpayers of $4.5 billion on the purchase of an existing pipeline. As part of those companies divesting themselves of their interests in Canada, they have also taken $86 billion in new investment and new opportunities to other jurisdictions.

Let us be clear: these companies are not going to stop investing in the energy sectors, but they are going to stop investing in the Canadian energy sector. They are taking those dollars to other jurisdictions. They are going to be investing in places like Kazakhstan, Texas, and the Middle East, not in Canada. Unfortunately, we will suffer the consequences when it comes to our economic opportunities.

I want to take an opportunity to clarify something we heard again in question period today. The Liberals keep touting themselves as somehow building a pipeline to tidewater. All this $4.5 billion has done is purchased an existing pipeline. It does not remove any of the obstacles to the building of the Trans Mountain expansion. In fact, the Liberal purchase of this pipeline, which we heard is closer to $2 billion in market value than $4.5 billion, does not build one inch of new pipeline to tidewater. They should be very clear that this purchase does nothing. It removes none of the obstacles that the provincial Government of B.C. has put forward. It does not remove any of the protesters who will be blocking the construction of the pipeline. It does not remove any of the judicial challenges that opponents of the pipeline have put forward.

When the Liberal Prime Minister had opportunity to show some leadership, stand with Canada's energy sector, and use section 92 of the British North America Act, the constitutional tools he had to ensure the project was done, he did none of those things. This will cost our economy thousands of jobs.

I want to make another thing very clear, and I think my colleagues across the floor do not quite understand this. These jobs are not for wrench monkeys and roughnecks, which are also extremely important, as they are the backbone of our energy sector, but they are for highly skilled individuals. They are engineers, geophysicists, and geologists. I have spoken to many of them in western Canada. Some of them have been without jobs for more than two years. These are highly skilled individuals who will go to other areas of the world to find work, and they will not come back. It will be very hard to attract these highly skilled individuals back to Canada.

I have spoken about the impact this has had on western Canada. I have certainly spoken to many of these unemployed energy sector workers in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and B.C. However, the Liberal government also needs to understand that the implications of its decisions on the energy sector ripple right across the country. I would like to talk about just one example.

A General Electric plant in Peterborough, Ontario, made turbines for the pipelines across Canada. General Electric had announced plans to expand that facility should energy east, Trans Mountain, or northern gateway be approved and move forward. However, when energy east was killed on a political decision by the Liberal government, and after the foot-dragging and mismanagement of the Trans Mountain decision, General Electric announced it would close its plant in Peterborough, costing 350 jobs.

Therefore, the ramifications of the Liberal decisions, lack of action on Canada's energy sector, and the Prime Minister saying we are going to phase out the oil sands have real consequences across the country. These 350 jobs in Peterborough, Ontario, are now gone because of the Liberal decision on the energy sector. These families in Peterborough are now going to have to find new work.

● (1655)

I do not think our colleagues across the floor really do understand that. In fact, the Liberal member of Parliament for Peterborough—Kawartha supported killing energy east and supported Bill C-69. She is not fighting for her own constituents. She is not fighting for the jobs of those families in her own riding. The Liberals are making an ideological decision to listen to the vocal minority of activists.

Even today, my colleague from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek talked about how great things were in Hamilton because it was building all these grain cars. I am not too sure how all these new grain cars help the energy sector. They will not be hauling oil in grain cars because we do not have a pipeline. Maybe he is anticipating that the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have lost their jobs in the energy sector are all of a sudden going to start farming. I do not think that is a real solution.

The solution is standing behind our energy sector, championing it and the jobs it creates and the social infrastructure it supports. That is the direction we should be supporting, not trying to find new jobs for those who have lost their positions. These are very well-paying middle-class jobs across the country, jobs that have now been lost in places like Fort McMurray, Calgary, Leduc, and certainly in Peterborough, Ontario, because of these ideological decisions. Bill C-69 would simply make matters worse.

We have heard from stakeholders and employees in the energy sector. They say that one of the most important drivers of investment in Canada has been that confidence, that reliability, and that regulatory certainty in Canada. Bill C-69 would do everything it possibly could to dismantle that certainty in our regulatory process.

The process is being politicized. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change would have the sole responsibility to decide whether a project would be for the greater good or in the national interest. One person, one minister, would have that decision.

Let us say an investor or a large energy company has an opportunity to apply for a project in Canada. It goes through all the regulatory processes and does all of its environmental assessment studies and financial assessments. However, as part of Bill C-69, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change will have the authority to say no even before it has its foot in the door. Even if it has passed all those environmental assessments, even if it has the support of first nations and communities along the way, even if it is proven to be in the national interest, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change has the authority to say that it is not something the government supports. That is what happened with energy east. The government put so many double standard burdens upon that project that there was no way the stakeholder would go ahead with it. That is what we are seeing as part of this process.

I spoke earlier about the ramifications this had on the sector and how we saw a government make ideological decisions, not decisions made on consultation with Canadians, not decisions based on science, not decisions that are fiscally based, and certainly not decisions based on economics. For example, let us look at agriculture.

This week or last week the Minister of Agriculture said that the vast majority of Canadian farmers supported the carbon tax. That was patently false, and we have heard that it is false. The Liberals are making decisions contrary to what Canadians are asking them to do. That is where this becomes extremely frustrating.

Farmers have reduced their use of diesel fuel by 200 million litres a year. Our energy sector now takes a third of the carbon footprint to produce one barrel of oil than it took 10 years ago. Members are going ask why the government is not investing in renewable energy and fossil fuels. Who do they think has been doing all the investing in renewable resources? It is our fossil fuel companies. Those are the ones which have the funds to invest, and they have been doing it for decades.

Why does the taxpayer have to be doing this when the private sector has already been doing it, and doing it successfully for decades? What the sector is asking for is for the government to get out of its way. It wants the government to let it do what it has been doing successfully, better than anybody in the world for generations. It just wants to do its job and get back to work.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there was certainly a lot in that presentation. I am not so sure, though, what was relevant to the topic at hand. If we are here to debate a bill and find ways to make it better so it achieves the goals and objectives we collectively, as a nation and certainly as a government have set out, what would be the three key things my hon. colleague would like to put forward to strengthen the bill to ensure it achieves what the Conservatives believe it should achieve?

● (1700)

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I find it a little ironic that the member is asking what we would like to put forward. The Liberals should give us a chance to have a fulsome debate and discussion on these bills, rather than ramming them through with time allocation.

Are they listening? I do not believe they are. Conservatives put forward amendments on Bill C-69 that they refused, as well as on every other bill. I have just one piece of advice on how to strengthen Bill C-69: scrap it.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in his speech, the member spent some time talking about the discretion the minister would have with this bill, and that is certainly one of the big concerns the NDP has: the rampant discretion at every step of the way in impact assessments.

I have to note that it was the Conservatives who brought in that ministerial cabinet discretion when they changed the way the NEB operated. It used to be that the NEB, an arm's-length regulatory body, made a decision, and that was the decision, but the Conservative government changed it so that cabinet would have the final decision. Now the Liberals have run with that and have expanded on it. Of course, the member does not like it when it is the other party that has that power and discretion, but I am concerned about any party having it. I wonder if the member would comment on that.

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I agree. I am very concerned. The Liberals campaigned on being science based, open, and transparent. They were going to make decisions based on those criteria, but Bill C-69 shows very clearly that they are going to make decisions that are not science based. We have seen that in a larger narrative within the government. Let us look at the food guide and front-of-package labelling. All these things that are going to have a significant impact on our industries and constituents are not based on science whatsoever. In fact, we have heard from stakeholders and constituents that they are actually going in the complete opposite direction of what science would tell them to do.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member across the way said he would like the government to just get out of the way, and if the government gets out of the way, the pipelines will be built.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Magic.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Magic, just like that.

Having said that, we just had 10 years of Stephen Harper's magic, when the government got out of the way. How many pipelines were built to tidewater? Zero. There was not an inch to tidewater. That was under the Conservatives' theory of getting out of the way.

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I love my colleague's enthusiasm and I am happy he asked that question. In fact, we built four major pipelines. In fact, we built 17 different pipeline projects. In fact, we built 8,000 kilometres of additional pipeline. How many have the Liberals built? Absolutely zero. They keep talking about their purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline, which, all of a sudden, has new markets to Asia. That is absolutely false. They have not built one single centimetre of new pipeline, and the Trans Mountain expansion would not get us to those Asia markets because it does not get us to deepwater ports. The oil and energy from that pipeline will be going to Washington and Oregon, the same places it has always been going. I hope Liberals will clarify the record on the misinformation they continue to share with Canadians.

● (1705)

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not think I have enough time to tackle every part of this loosely put together bill, but I am going to attempt to target as much as I can.

Right off the bat, one of the things that would happen under the bill is that the Liberals would change the National Energy Board, which was created in 1959 by Prime Minister Diefenbaker. It was totally made a fool by Pierre Trudeau. He wrecked the energy industry in Alberta and the west for a generation, and Junior is about to do it for three generations. It would change the name of it to the Canadian energy regulator act as well, just to try to get rid of that family's connection to it. No inches or miles of pipeline are going to be built because of this bill. It is, "Let us wash it down, get a new face, and pretend that none of the other ever happened."

I am going to get into the navigable waters act in a bit, but everything the government does has everything to do with virtue-signalling and nothing to do with reality or getting things done. I can give all kinds of examples.

On the Firearms Act, what did the Liberals do? They bragged during the election, and every chance they have had since, that they were going to tackle gang crime and illegal firearms. What did they do? They brought out a bill that sends a virtue signal to all Canadians who hate firearms and want to get rid of them totally, and they pretend that they are tackling gang crime and illegal firearms. It would do nothing. It would tackle law-abiding firearms owners.

Another example is that they want to send signals to environmentalists, tree squeezers. They lied to the veterans and said that they would give them everything they wanted, and then all of a sudden, they said that they were asking too much and that the government could not do that.

The reason I am mentioning this is that there is a trend here. It is all about virtue. It is not about actually doing anything.

We have to go back in history. When the environmental approval process was changed by the previous government, one of the worst examples was the Mackenzie Valley pipeline. For some 25 to 30 years, we kept leading companies along, saying we would do this or that. It was set up to basically fail. Why would any government, why would any person, want to take our companies, which want to invest in industry, whether it is the oil industry or whatever, and tie them up in a process that is made for the objector and tie them up for years?

The previous government made a process that was still a thorough approval process, but there were timelines. Do not drag companies along for years and years. Give them a timeline. If we have to tell them no, tell them no, but do not lead them along for 25 to 30 years, as happened with the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, because that is not good for anything. Aboriginal communities up there were banking on money that would have flowed to them from that job. Their hopes that were built up for 25 years or more went totally gone down the drain, and I do not mean that as a pun.

There was a 180-day planning phase. Ministerial discretion was put in and also veto power. Again, that was put in after going through the process that basically said it was done. Say yes or say no, but do not lead them along.

● (1710)

Why should Canadians trust this new system? It is obviously catering to different groups. It goes back to that virtue signal. There is always a process where intervenors can get in and have their say. Of course, that is a good thing. However, what the government has done with the changes it has put in is that we now have to accept all foreign intervenors. Why in the world would any government want to add that? This is about a Canadian project, not a pan-world project. To allow foreign intervenors or foreign money is totally unacceptable.

If anyone has any doubt about why this is not going to work or whether it will make things worse than they already are, all we have to do is look at the recent Kinder Morgan decision. The government created a climate so bad that Kinder Morgan basically said, "Why in the world would we take our shareholders' money and invest it in this project?" I totally get that. Why would it? It never asked any government for one red cent. However, to save face, or to tie this thing up for many more years, what did the government do? It reached into my pocket, and my kids' and grandkids' and all the members' pockets as well, to pull out $4.5 billion to give to a company that paid $550 million for that pipeline. I have to mention that it is a 65-year-old pipeline. Now that $4.5 billion of taxpayers' money is going to be spent somewhere in the United States, where it will be able to create some industry and generate some income on that investment. That is all taxpayers' money.

Under this bill, it is only going to get worse. We have not seen the tip of the iceberg. It is a trend that is certainly not going to change with this bill.

I want to talk a bit about what stakeholders are saying about this legislation.

The Canadian Environmental Law Association stated:

> ...Bill C-69 perpetuates the much-criticized political decision-making model found in CEAA 2012.
>
> Unless the proposed Impact Assessment Act is substantially revised as it proceeds through Parliament, [the association] concludes that the new EA process will not restore public trust or ensure credible, participatory and science-based decision-making.

That science-based decision-making is something we should think a lot about.

The Canadian Energy Association stated:

> CEPA is very concerned with the scope of the proposed new Impact Assessment process. From the outset, CEPA has stated that individual project reviews are not the appropriate place to resolve broad policy issues, such as climate change, which should be part of a Pan-Canadian Framework. Including these policy issues adds a new element of subjectivity that could continue to politicize the assessment process.

The Mining Association of Canada stated:

> At first glance, the draft legislation introduces a range of new concepts related to timelines and costs, which depending on how they are implemented, could adversely impact the industry's competitiveness and growth prospects.

I have more, which I will not get into. However, I want to touch on the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

The changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act came about a number of years ago when the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, SARM, came to the rural caucus I happened to chair at the time. That in itself is not significant, other than that I know the history of this act. I thought navigable waters, and the way DFO's overzealous officials handled them, was just a rural Ontario problem. It turns out it was right across Canada. SARM is the one that deserves credit for initiating the changes to that act. I am very proud of it and how the changes went.

Waterways we can float our grandkids' or kids' little rubber duckies down maybe for a couple of days of the year in the spring were deemed to be something we could paddle a canoe down. We got rid of that in the changes.

● (1715)

I know I am running out of time. We fixed the process.

Now the cost is going to be unbelievable, and it is not going to be good for Canadians.

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his remarks, I am dismayed. As much as I disagreed with Prime Minister Harper on several occasions, I always referred to him as Prime Minister Harper. I think it is a disgrace that the member just referred to our Prime Minister as junior. I hope he will take a moment to apologize for making those remarks in this House.

My hon. colleague spoke of how we are making it more difficult for companies to get resources to market, and so forth, because of the red tape we are putting in place. During the 10 years Stephen Harper was in government, when oil was $150 a barrel and there was lot less uncertainty and international markets were not pulling back their investments in oil like they are doing right now, why could his government, with supposedly less red tape than we are putting in place, not get one new pipeline to tidewater? I hope the hon. member can answer that question.

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, absolutely. I believe the gentleman was in the House when my hon. colleague, the member for Foothills, explained a lot better than I can the number of pipelines that were done. There were four major ones done, and I believe it was over 8,000 kilometres' worth of pipe that went in the ground. Sure, we would like to have done more. However, for anyone to be able to sit there without smirking and distort the truth like that member just did—well, that is about all I am going to say about it.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I certainly cannot argue with the fact there is much distorting of the truth here. I really want to talk to the hon. member about the last Parliament, when the Conservative government did remove or gut the environmental assessment process. It also removed almost all of the protections of our waterways. That is a fact that can be looked up.

Then the Liberal government promised that it was going to restore those things. As we see with Bill C-69, it has really fallen short of the mark. Bill C-69 has done nothing. It does nothing to reverse these changes, which the Liberals promised they would do.

Do the Conservatives still believe that waterways and lakes do not need any protection? Is that what I am hearing—that we do not need any protections for water?

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, I hope the member is saying that in jest. Of course we do.

I find that some members, including the member who just spoke, still believe the theory that lakes and rivers were not protected. In that act, the only ones mentioned were ones where changes were made. Anything else in that act remains protected, as always. I think members know that, and she probably does as well.

I hope the hon. member quits repeating mistruths like that, because that is exactly what they are.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his presentation. I think it clearly outlines some of the positions and gave us a bit of insight into where we are and where we have come from. The member said that the previous government had put legislation in place and had done some significant things.

Does my hon. colleague believe that the current process is enough, that nothing more needs to be done, and that there is nothing in this bill that should actually move forward?

● (1720)

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, I have had the pleasure of attending a few NATO meetings with the hon. member down the way, and I have a lot of respect for her. Maybe there is some minor stuff in here, but it is the whole target or aim of this bill. It is all about virtue-signalling and about reversing what a previous government did. That has happened so often that maybe I am a little thin-skinned about it. I will grant that. However, changing a bill because another government brought it in is not the way to govern. This thing just basically throws it wide open.

The member asked if there is nothing more left to do. I would say there is: Instead of driving investment away as happened with Kinder Morgan, her government and leadership should not buy companies out but encourage them to build, by at least having a fair and reasonable approval process.

The Deputy Speaker: We are going to resume debate, and I will let the hon. member for Calgary Shepard know that there is not quite the full 10 minutes available to him at this point. He will have about eight minutes and then will have remaining time when the House next gets back to debate on the question.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to add my voice to this debate, obviously in opposition to the bill before us.

I will begin as I always do, because I want to get it in early, with a Yiddish proverb: "Misfortune binds together." That is how a lot of Calgarians feel, especially in my riding.

Bill C-69 is simply more misfortune piled on other ill-advised decisions by the government that have hurt constituents and energy workers in my riding. They have spent a lifetime getting experience, an education, and then pursuing a career they were hoping would last their entire lifetime. This is something they were passionate about, producing energy in a responsible and ethical way, which they will now not be able to do.

I have been told repeatedly by executives, industry, and energy workers, including a constituent of mine, Evan, a few days ago, that when Bill C-69 passes Parliament, it will put an end to all future major energy infrastructure projects. No company will put forward major projects again, because the process will be much too complex, involve too many criteria, and will be too complicated, with too much political risk associated with satisfying a minister in order to reach the completion date of just the permitting process. The CEO of Suncor has said publicly that this will put an end to investment in the energy industry. The CEO of Sierra Energy has said exactly the same thing. Therefore, misfortune binds together.

I will explain other things that bind together as a result of this particular piece of proposed legislation, which that would damage the opportunity of energy workers and their families to continue working in this very successful sector.

We should be very proud of this sector of the economy, because we have been exporting the R and D, innovation, commercialized products and services from it for a long time, alongside the product that we export to our friends down south. Even though we have had difficulties negotiating a successful NAFTA renewal, they are still our friends, and we are still trying to make them understand that at the end of the day, our success is their success.

We often hear government members say that the environment and the economy go hand in hand. The Liberals are making it seem like it is a zero-sum game: one unit of the environment gained is one unit of the economy lost. It is zero-sum, and there are no two ways around it. When we look at Bill C-69, that is evident. The Liberals are trying to gain many more units of environment, and we are going to be losing out on the economic side, based on commentary by both energy workers and executives, who are simply saying that there is no way that they can invest in the Canadian economy, hire energy workers in Canada, in Calgary and Alberta, with these types of rules in place.

On the misfortunes I talked about, there is the carbon tax, for instance. Often in this chamber, I hear members say things like, "We should refine it and upgrade it where we mine it, where we extract it out of the ground". Well, the highest carbon taxes are paid by refineries and upgraders. It is a GHG-intensive industry.

Do we say the same thing to farmers who produce wheat, that we should upgrade it and refine it here? Do we say that to the farmer who produces canola? Do we say that to the farmer who produces big lentils? Maybe we should force all farmers to produce soup. They should not be allowed to export lentils outside Canada. The same idea, the same drive that says we should never export any type of bitumen or oil out of the country until it is refined and upgraded to the highest level product, could be applied to our agricultural sector.

I have heard repeatedly from energy workers that the tanker ban off the B.C. coast is damaging, because it sends a signal that there is a tanker ban now. Actually, it is just a pretend ban because it just moves tankers 100 kilometres farther off the coast to an area where there already is tanker traffic, which is going to continue as long as it does not stop in a Canadian port. However, it sends a signal that those types of workers and that sector of the economy are not wanted anymore by the government.

On the misfortune, there is a close electoral alliance between radical environmentalists, their foreign financiers, and the future electoral prospects of the Liberal government. That is the case. We know it to be true. The Liberals' success in the 2015 election was closely linked to their making promises on the environment that they absolutely could not keep. They made those promises fully knowing they would never be able to keep them. The misfortune continues.

● (1725)

Twice already, the Prime Minister has said he would like to phase out the oil sands. Every single time the Prime Minister says that, the first thing I get by email and phone from Albertans in my riding is, "He has done it again. He said it again." The last time he said it was at the Assemblee Nationale in Paris.

Many workers question the sincerity of the Prime Minister when he says that he wants this sector to succeed, which is supposedly why he expropriated Kinder Morgan and purchased its pipeline for $4.5 billion. Workers do not trust him. They do not believe him when he says it. They think he is speaking from both sides of his mouth. He is saying one thing to one crowd and something completely different to another crowd. They do not trust him. However, it is their misfortune that he is the Prime Minister right now.

Bill C-69 increases the number of criteria that will be considered during the regulatory process. What logically happens is that before a company even puts in an application to consider a major new energy infrastructure project, they will do their research and due diligence. That will add months and years to the pre-regulatory process. Before even applying, one has to have more information to prove to the regulator that one meets all of the new criteria. Embedded in Bill C-69 is the opportunity for the minister to say "no" at multiple stages of the process.

I have heard Liberal caucus members say how great the bill is and that shortened timelines give certainty. The bill does no such thing because it will increase the number of criteria and datasets that one needs to collect to prove one's case.

This is exactly where I am going to come to my last point of why energy east was cancelled. Energy east and the company's executives and energy workers said they had no way of meeting the new requirements of downstream and upstream emissions. To collect that vast sum of information and provide it to the government was impossible. The company made the only wise decision on behalf of its shareholders and abandoned the permitting regulatory process. There was no other choice. However, that was a political decision by the government. The government is responsible for that and nobody else. The business decision that drove driving Kinder Morgan out of the country, which led to the government expropriating the company and purchasing the pipeline, was the same type of decision-making process Trans Canada had to use on energy east. Those decisions are deeply connected.

Obviously, I will be voting against this bill. The last point of data I want to provide is that under the government, we have seen thousands of kilometres of pipeline cancelled, whereas under in the previous government, we had thousands of kilometres of pipeline finished.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member will have approximately two minutes and 10 seconds when we return to Bill C-69.

It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1730)

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill S-210, An Act to amend An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Civil Marriage Act and the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed without debate to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.) moved that Bill S-210, an act to amend An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Civil Marriage Act and the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be concurred in.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Pursuant to order made Tuesday, May 29, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 13, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-69, An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Shepard has two minutes and 10 seconds left.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was a very unusual interruption for private members' business.

In the last two and a half minutes I have left, I will speak about the misfortune that I mentioned in the Yiddish proverb.

Misfortune is connected together. It comes in a series. It sticks together. Oftentimes I have heard government caucus members saying things like "the previous government never built any pipelines to tidewater". I want to address that.

Four major pipelines were built in North America, all of which eventually led to a coastal market. To say otherwise is like saying, "There are no flights from Calgary to Ottawa, so there are no direct flights from Calgary to Ottawa." I suppose I can fly from Calgary to Toronto, then Toronto to Ottawa. I will get there. It is like saying there is no highway in the community I live in, completely ignoring the fact that I can take Auburn Bay Drive to get onto the on-ramp to get onto the highway. The same principle applies here.

Every major pipeline project built in Canada, including toward the United States for export, follows the exact same principle, whether it is Keystone XL, the TMX Anchor Loop, or Enbridge's Line 3. All of them eventually lead to a coastal market, because most of North America's refineries are located on a coast, and a great deal of them are located in Texas.

Speaking of Texas, next year Texas is on track to become the largest producer of oil in the world. Next year Texas will also build more kilometres of pipeline than the rest of the United States and Canada combined. That is just one state, and it is about to achieve what I would call energy dominance in North America.

Those are the facts, and now we have this piece of legislation before us that will add more misfortune to Canada's energy industry.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have seen some histrionics before, but those could have given me whiplash.

The point is this, and I will ask the member to comment on it. Sending oil to the United States and the United States alone is costing our economy, conservatively, $15 billion a year. We are sending oil at a deep discount to a country that does not like to trade with us very much anymore.

Building something to tidewater in Canada is what the previous Conservative government failed to do, and that failure has cost us dearly. Could the member comment on that?

● (1735)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, that member's government is responsible for the cancellation of energy east, which would have led directly to an east coast market. The price differential issue has been a point of conversation in politics in Alberta for the past 15 years, because it has been a deep cost to the Alberta treasury. It is nice of the Liberals to finally notice this fact. It is nice of the Liberals to finally notice that there is something like a price costing Albertans a huge amount of money.

Why do they encourage radical environmentalists and foreign financiers to finance opposition to our major energy infrastructure projects when they know this to be the fact?

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech, and especially for his Yiddish proverb. We all wait for that with bated breath each time he rises.

We have heard a lot of concern from the Conservatives about the excessive powers the minister would have to intervene at any stage of the impact assessment process and to put a stop to it, or create an extra process.

I am wondering if the member could comment on the fact that it was the Conservatives who initially gave the minister and cabinet that power with the National Energy Board. Previously, National Energy Board decisions were final, but the previous Conservative government gave that final say to cabinet, and now those members are concerned that the Liberals have run with this and made it rampant throughout Bill C-69 and will put it into law. Could he comment on that?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member both for his question and his appreciation of Yiddish proverbs. We sometimes share them in the lobby.

Some ministerial accountability for the decisions Liberals make and the activities of the department should be expected by the House of Commons. It should be an expectation. Excessive amounts of ministerial oversight, such as an ability to overrule or redirect decisions and impose one's own personal political views on a process or individual projects, is the wrong way to go. The balance between having just enough regulatory and ministerial oversight and too much burdensome regulation with ministerial discretion is the balance that we are trying to find, and it is not in Bill C-69.

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talks a lot about regulation and how that is going to stifle growth. I am wondering if he could comment on the fact that the four provinces that currently have a price on carbon—Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia—have all seen the strongest growth in the country. British Columbia, which has some of the strongest environment regulations in place, is one of the fastest growing economies in the country while, at the same time, protecting the environment. I am wondering if the hon. member knows something that I do not. Perhaps he has some secret sauce that he would like to share with me.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, the member must know that the parliamentary budget office wrote a report on the fact that the carbon tax alone will cost the Canadian economy between 0.4% to 0.5% of GDP growth. When I asked the representatives of the PBO if there were any other government policy that would purposefully damage our economy, they could not answer the question. They said they could not think of one at the table and would to come back to me with an answer, which leads me to believe this is a self-inflicted injury by the government.

There is an Ontario election today. By the end of today, my hope is that Ontario voters will send a very strong signal to the federal government to abandon this carbon tax fiasco.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise in response to Bill C-69, the government's environmental and regulatory bill, one that is supposed to be revolutionary. This just brings us to another long list of broken promises that the Prime Minister made when he campaigned in 2015 as the member for Papineau at the time. He made some great promises to Canadians.

We heard a lot about sowing the seeds of fear, that Canadians had lost confidence in some things like our environmental assessment plan. The groups that were promoting that had a sole purpose. There was a lot of talk about foreign-funded groups and how they had influenced elections, both on this side of the border as well as the other side of the border recently.

We know very well that during the 2015 election, and I know because I was one of the candidates who was targeted, groups were targeting Conservative members of Parliament. They were talking about how damaging Mr. Harper was to our environment. We heard people say how we were fearmongering with respect to Bill C-59. If we looked at it and followed where the dollar started, these groups started in other jurisdictions, and perhaps not in Canada.

What would be the sole purpose for those groups to sow the seed of fear or perhaps put doubt in the minds of Canadians in the industry or in the government of the day. It would be to really shake up the economy. Why would they do that? Probably because the money they get comes from big oil or big energy groups in the U.S. This is the fact. We know this. To some extent, the Prime Minister, the Liberals, and perhaps the NDP have bought into those groups. I know about the NDP candidate who I ran against in my region, the one who had probably the best photography team I have ever seen. Again, my riding was one of those targeted because ridings they thought they would win, but I proved them wrong.

Let us talk about the growing list of broken promises, and this is so relevant to Bill C-69.

The Prime Minister talked about a small deficit of $10 billion at that time, and the budget would be balanced. There is a record and a history with this. He also said that under his government, the Liberals would be the most open and transparent government in Canadian history. There is a smattering of applause on the other side, but we know it is not true. When he created the mandate letters, he said that the ministers would be more accountable and more open to Canadians. He also said that he would let the debate reign, yet today we are in the 41st closure of debate.

● (1740)

During the campaign, the member for Papineau said that under his government the Harper government's way of doing omnibus bills would be in the past, that it would never happen again. Today, we are speaking to a 400-page bill.

We know the Prime Minister is not really very happy. He is not a very strong champion of our energy sector. We know this from one of his very first speeches to the world, when he said that under his government Canada would be known more for our resourcefulness rather than our resources. We know he has gotten himself into a little trouble for some of the comments he made on the world stage, when he said that he wished the energy sector could be phased out a little faster. We also know he got himself into trouble when he went into Alberta, during a time when we were facing some terrible issues, to speak to the out-of-work oil workers. There is that famous clip where a gentleman asked "What am I going to do? I'm out of work. I don't know whether I'm going to have a home. I don't know how I'm going to feed my children". What was his comment? "Hang in there".

The Liberals hated our Navigable Protection Act. The reason I bring this up is because the fisheries, oceans and Canadian Coast Guard committee, FOPO, studies some of the changes to legislation brought forward by government. The Liberals said that Prime Minister Harper had a war on the environment, and the changes he made to the Navigable Waters Protection Act were because the Conservatives did not care.

The Liberals like to bring in academics, NGOs, and environmental groups. Witness after witness, when asked to provide proof if any of the changes from 2012 to the Fisheries Act and Navigable Waters Protection Act would cause any harmful death or damage to our waterway, not one witness could provide proof. In fact, one of our hon. colleagues was part of the group that wrote the changes to the legislation. He talked about why some of these navigable waterway regulations were changed. He said that it was because of our farmers. If farmers had a drainage ditch that had been washout and repairs had to be made, whether to accommodate their livestock or their crops, it took a lot of time, waiting to get that done. Also, if a municipality was isolated because a road had been washed out, there were a lot of challenges in getting the repairs done.

I could go on and on.

The Prime Minister and all of his ministers like to stand and with their hands on their hearts, they pledge they will consult with Canadians from coast to coast to coast. They tell us that every Canadian will have a say. We know the consultations are not true. In fact, they are shutting down debate.

As I like to do every chance I get, I want to remind folks on the other side, and all Canadians, that the House is theirs. Shutting down debate means the 338 members of Parliament who were elected to be the voices of all Canadians do not have their say. They are not able to bring their constituents' voices to Ottawa. The Prime Minister, his cabinet, the other Liberals want to bring the voice of Ottawa to those communities. We know that the only voice that seems to matter is the Prime Minister's voice.

● (1750)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member spoke about the Stephen Harper government and how it was accused of fearmongering and sowing doubt. The Conservatives are still doing that.

The hon. member spoke about the economy and jobs and how the ministers needed to be accountable. Under this government, we have had the fastest growth in the G7. Over 600,000 jobs have been created by Canadians. We have a robust oceans protection plan. We have Bill C-69. We have a $1.3 billion investment in biodiversity and conservation.

What would the hon. colleague across the way say to his constituents, who have benefited from the fact that our government has taken the growth of the economy and the environment hand in hand?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, many of my constituents are still waiting for a softwood lumber deal. They cannot get it. We have been waiting and we have been shouting and screaming. We have offered to help the Liberal team lead the way. Team Canada holding hands, trying to get the deal done is not going to do it. The Prime Minister and his cabinet's charm is not working.

With the ever-increasing protectionist environment to the south and with its policies, investment is fleeing Canada by the billions. By the way, part of that investment was announced last week, the $4.5 billion or more for a 65-year-old piece of aging infrastructure. We did not have to buy it. It is not doing anything. The Liberals have not built it. That investment is flowing south of the border thanks to the Prime Minister.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague to expand on the concept in Bill C-69 with regard to a minister's arbitrary powers. We saw a little of that when the Conservatives changed the process. I would like to know if there are concerns now with respect to some of the explicit powers which will not be based on science.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I know our hon. colleagues have been waiting for me to mention this. We have talked a lot about it for the last little while.

With respect to the surf clam, a minister has arbitrarily taken a quota from an established company, and that has shaken the investment of a whole sector. This is an example of a minister having the sole discretion to make these decisions arbitrarily. We can talk about the precautionary principle and a minister's ability to make a decision in the absence of science.

The Liberals promoted the precautionary principle. The ministers talked about applying the precautionary principle to documents, which would make things better with respect to marine protected areas and the ability of the minister to step in right away and make a decision. I will go back to my previous comment.

When one minister has that power, without consultation, that impacts the communities. I see it in Grand Bank, Newfoundland, where jobs will be lost. I see it in the marine protected areas being introduced by the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and how that is impacting our fishing communities and fishers on the east coast as well as on the west coast. I see it with the tanker moratorium. The Liberals talked about all the consultation that went into that. First nations are launching lawsuits against the federal government because they have not consulted. I have deep concern when a minister has that much power.

● (1755)

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise in the House today to speak in support of Bill C-59, the government's proposed legislation to update and modernize the country's national security framework.

This landmark bill covers a number of measures that were informed by the views and opinions of a broad range of Canadians during public consultations in 2016. It was in that same spirit of openness, engagement, and transparency that Bill C-59 was referred to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security before second reading.

The committee recently finished its study of the bill. I want to thank the committee for its diligent and thorough examination of this comprehensive legislation. An even stronger bill, with over 40 adopted amendments, is now back in the House. The measures it contains would do two things at once: strengthen Canada's ability to effectively address and counter 21st-century threats, while safeguarding the rights and freedoms we cherish as Canadians—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Calgary Shepard is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, as much as I am interested in the member's speech right now, I think we are still talking about Bill C-69. I believe the member is referring to Bill C-59 in his statement, which is not germane to the discussion we are having in the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is the member speaking to Bill C-69?

Mr. Nick Whalen: No, Mr. Speaker, Bill C-59.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member is absolutely right.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to talk about Bill C-69. It is an important piece of legislation.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker(Mr. Anthony Rota): I am glad we clarified that. I will let the hon. member continue, then.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Speaker, in my riding, St. John's East, people are very keen on both. I hear this from people in all parts of my riding. People are very concerned about the environment and also very concerned about the jobs that go along with natural resource extraction. They are concerned about whales, and we had a motion about whales earlier this week in the House, under private members' business. At the same time, they are concerned about the jobs of their neighbours who work in oil and gas extraction, and those issues. They are concerned about the people who work at the C-NLOPB and the Atlantic Accord. They think our government has struck the right balance with this current legislation in making sure that the economy and the environment go hand in hand.

When we look at the types of court challenges that were brought against the NEB and against previous environmental assessment projects that were put forward under CEAA 2012 and previous legislation, we see that the balance that was required by the courts had not been struck. We had a situation where the level of consultation with indigenous peoples and first nations was not met, so decisions were struck down. In other cases they were challenged, which led to uncertainty in the process. What we have now is a piece of legislation that allows the government to address not just environmental assessment but also impact assessment in a much more comprehensive and holistic way.

It is the role of the federal government not just to make sure that environmental assessment for nationally regulated projects is done right, but also to make sure that there are consultations with scientists and that the economic benefits of projects of national benefit are spread evenly and enjoyed by the broadest variety of people possible. It is also to make sure that our consultations with indigenous people are undertaken in a way that is comprehensive and thoughtful and meets our obligations, whatever those standards of obligation happen to be.

If it is a situation that affects indigenous land rights, then the consent of those groups will be sought and considered. When the rights of multiple groups are contested, those need to be balanced. If some type of fishing right or fishing interest is ancillary to the development of an offshore oil and gas project, we need to make sure that all the groups whose fishing rights might be affected by the project are appropriately consulted, that they are given the resources they need to do their job, and that the right people are on the panels to make sure this is the case.

● (1800)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his ability to switch gears midway and to reconcile two pieces of legislation.

We on this side of the House, as a government, believe that it is important to have a whole-of-government approach to every single piece of legislation that we move forward with. When we are talking about public safety, it in fact has a link to climate change and ensuring that people can live prosperous lives in this country. Protecting our country is just as important as protecting our individual citizens.

I would like to ask my colleague across the way whether he believes that when we look at the comprehensiveness of the legislation we have put forward, with the budgets we have put forward, the oceans protection plan, and investments in conservation and biodiversity, and when we think about the investments we have made in people and in ensuring that we are protecting them, is it not a full, comprehensive plan that this government has put forward for Canadians?

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Speaker, I would go one step further to say that the government has done it in a way that takes into account the views of so many different Canadians.

It was a very comprehensive consultation process. There were multiple task forces engaged on the fisheries, transport, natural resources, and environment files, to make sure that the right ideas were at the table and would be considered in crafting the legislation.

Then, throughout the legislative review process, the committee undertook the tremendous task of bringing together hundreds of different potential amendments that brought the thoughts of different environmental groups, industry groups, and regulators across the country to make sure that this was the most comprehensive piece of legislation we could have so that we could get this right. Not only will industry have the certainty it needs to move its projects forward in tighter timelines, but environmental groups and indigenous groups will know that they will be heard, and that the conditions placed on future projects will protect our environment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have just very clearly seen that members on this side of the House want to talk about bills. We want to talk about Bill C-59. We want to talk about Bill C-69. All the parliamentarians on this side of the House want to express their views. Unfortunately, the Liberals have cut parliamentarians' speaking time so much that some members have to talk about two bills at once.

I would like my colleague who spoke about both Bill C-59 and Bill C-69 in the same speech to tell me whether he sometimes feels forgotten by the government because he sits on this side of the House. The Conservatives, the NDP, the Bloc Québécois, and the Green Party all represent our constituents here in the House, and they want to hear us speak about all of these bills.

I commend my colleague over here for wanting to speak about two bills, because he knows that we will not have time to talk about all of these things and that the members on the other side of the House often prevent us from speaking. I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about that.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his comments. I was in the middle of preparing my remarks on Bill C-59 and I am planning on speaking to Bill C-69 next week. I will have a chance to talk about it at third reading. I may have lost it, I am not sure. I have already said half of what I intended to say on the matter.

At the same time, I know that our sitting hours have been extended because we cannot fit all the members who want to speak into the limited time that the House has to implement all of our legislation and amendments. It is a shame we do not have thousands of hours to speak in the House. These are the hours we have, and we have only four years to fulfill all our election promises.

Now, we are working on fulfilling our promises, and I think I will get a chance to speak on Bill C-69 next week and Bill C-59 a few minutes from now.

● (1805)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 6:05 p.m., pursuant to an order made on Wednesday, June 6, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

[*English*]

The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 15 to 23, 28 to 61, 100 to 103, 105 to 147, 149 to 205, 208 to 214, and 216. A negative vote on Motion No. 1 requires the question to be put on Motions Nos. 3, 4, 5, and 11.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The question is on Motion No. 62. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 63, 64, 66 to 79, 81 to 99, 104, 206, 207, and 215.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The recorded division on this motion stands deferred.

Normally at this time, the House would proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division at the report stage of the bill. However, pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 29, 2018, the divisions stand deferred until Monday, June 11, 2018, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

NATIONAL SECURITY ACT, 2017

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-59, An Act respecting national security matters, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I misheard and referred to Bill C-69 and not Bill C-59 when I rose to speak earlier.

I am pleased to rise again to support Bill C-59, the government's proposed legislation to update and modernize the country's national security framework. This landmark bill covers a number of measures that were informed by the views and opinions of a broad range of Canadians during public consultations in 2016.

It was in that same spirit of openness, engagement, and transparency that Bill C-59 was referred to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security before second reading, and the committee recently finished its study of this bill. I want to thank the committee members for their diligent and thorough examination of the legislation. An even stronger bill, with over 40 adopted amendments, is now before the House, thanks to their great work.

The measures would do two things at once. They would strengthen Canada's ability to effectively address and counter 21st-century threats while safeguarding the rights and freedoms we cherish as Canadians.

This is where I get into some new material. Rather than elaborate on any specific proposed measure, I will focus my remarks today on the high level of engagement, consultation, and analysis that contributed to the legislation we find before us today.

Bill C-59 is a result of the most comprehensive review of Canada's national security framework since the passing of the CSIS Act more than 30 years ago. That public review included unprecedented open and transparent public consultations on national security undertaken by Public Safety Canada and the Department of Justice. Canadians were consulted on key elements of Canada's national security laws and policies to ensure that they reflected the rights, values, and freedoms of Canadians. Several issues were covered, including countering radicalization to violence, oversight and accountability, threat reduction, and the Anti-terrorism Act, 2015, which is the former Bill C-51.

All Canadians were invited and encouraged to take part in the consultations, which were held between September and December 2016. The response was tremendous. Thousands of people weighed in through a variety of avenues, both in person and online. Citizens, community leaders, experts and academics, non-governmental organizations, and parliamentarians alike made their views and ideas known over the course of the consultation period. In the end, tens of thousands of views were received, all of which were valuable in shaping the scope and content of Bill C-59.

With almost 59,000 responses received, the online consultation is what generated by far the largest volume of input, using a questionnaire consisting of more than 60 questions organized into 10 themes.

Nearly 18,000 submissions were also received by email. These consisted mainly of letters and other pieces of communication submitted by individuals. In addition, public town halls were held in five Canadian cities: Halifax, Markham, Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Yellowknife. This gave citizens across the country a chance to share their thoughts and opinions in person.

The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security also held numerous meetings and consultations. It even travelled across the country to hear testimony not only from expert witnesses but also from members of the Canadian public, who were invited to express their views.

A digital town hall and two Twitter chats were also organized. Members of the public also had the opportunity to make their voices heard at 17 engagement events led by members of Parliament at the constituency level. In addition, 14 in-person sessions were held with academics and experts across the country, as well as one round table of civil society experts.

A total of 79 submissions were received from stakeholders, experts, and academics. The Canadian Bar Association, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Information Technology Association of Canada are just a few of the organizations that participated in the consultations.

A great deal of time, effort, and expertise was spent not only to ensure that engaged citizens and interested parties were heard, but also to painstakingly collect and consider all input received from the public. All data collected during the consultation process was reviewed and prepared for analysis. The next step was to carefully analyze every comment, submission, letter, and other forms of input.

These views have been published on the Government of Canada's open data portal, so anyone interested in learning more about what was said can see what was said.

In addition, an independently prepared report provides an overview of what was heard during the consultation. The results are summarized in 10 sections, one for each of the themes explored in both "Our Security, Our Rights: National Security Green Paper, 2016" and the online questionnaire.

● (1810)

While it would be difficult to summarize everything we have heard from Canadians, I can speak to a few key themes that emerged. First of all, I can attest that in any large volume of input, there will be widely different opinions. That was certainly the case in the public consultation on national security. However, the results made one thing perfectly clear. Canadians want accountability, transparency, and effectiveness from their security and intelligence agencies. They also expect their rights, freedoms, and privacy to be protected at the same time as their security.

Consistent with what was heard, Bill C-59 would modernize and enhance Canada's security and intelligence laws to ensure that our agencies have the tools they need to protect us. It would do so with a legal and constitutional framework that complies with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Taken together, the proposed measures in Bill C-59represent extensive improvements to Canada's national security framework. They also reflect thousands upon thousands of opinions expressed by this country's national security community, Parliamentarians across party lines, and the Canadian public writ large.

I firmly believe that it is important for all Canadians to be informed and engaged on Canada's national security framework. I am proud to stand behind a government that shares that belief.

The input received during the public consultation process in the pre-study period at committee was both considerable and instrumental in the development of Bill C-59 itself. There is no doubt in my mind that the legislation before this House today has been strengthened and improved as a result of the committee's close scrutiny and clause-by-clause consideration of the bill. To highlight just one example, the bill would now include provisions enacting the avoiding complicity in mistreatment by foreign entities act. This act would have to do with the ministerial directions issued last fall to Canada's national security and intelligence agencies. To ensure transparency and accountability, those directions would be made public under an amended Bill C-59. They would also be reported on annually to the public, to review bodies, and to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians.

I encourage all members of this House to vote in favour of Bill C-59. Should Bill C-59pass, this important piece of legislation would enhance Canada's national security, keep its citizens safe, and safeguard Canadians' constitutionally protected rights and freedoms. For all these reasons, I urge my honourable colleagues to join me in supporting Bill C-59.

With the bit of extra time that remains to me after my prepared remarks, I would just like to talk a little bit about my experience at the door during the election in 2015.

In the early part of June and July, many Canadians were concerned about Bill C-51. It was a hot topic of conversation. What the former Liberal third party opposition had attempted to do at committee in the previous session of Parliament was at least get some amendments into Bill C-51 to encourage and strengthen oversight and make sure that the bill not only protected security but made sure that Canadians' privacy and freedoms were being respected.

That led to a lot of difficult conversations, because during the campaign, the three parties were really divided on this particular issue. The Conservatives were adamant that they had struck the right balance. The New Democratic Party wanted to repeal it entirely. The Liberal Party stuck to its guns and said that it was a difficult conversation to have with people, but the legislation was needed. They said we needed this legislation but we needed to fix it, we needed to do it right, and we needed to make sure that it had the safeguards we promised and attempted to achieve at the amendment stage for Bill C-51 in the last Parliament.

That is what we have done. However, we have done even more than that. We have gone back to the drawing board and have let many different groups participate to make sure that we got it right.

I just want to provide one little quote, from national security experts Craig Forcese and Kent Roach, who have said that this legislation is "the real deal: the biggest reform in this area since 1984" and that it comes "at no credible cost to security."

I believe that through all the consultations, the drafting of the bill by the minister and his staff, the review of the bill at committee, and the help of all members of the House, we now have a piece of legislation that strikes the right balance that will make Canadians safer and will also protect their rights and freedoms, which is what we promised in the 41st Parliament we would do if elected, and we are doing it now.

● (1815)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to applaud the member for the quick recovery when we returned to Bill C-59.

I also want to mention that it is interesting that he talked about how members on the committee were able to work together to report this bill back to us, but he must know that all 29 amendments suggested by the Conservatives on that committee were rejected. I am concerned that perhaps his interpretation of the congenial interaction among members at the committee equalled actually hearing and listening to and accepting a point of view on the Conservative side that certain provisions should not be amended or should be amended in a certain way to assure ourselves that our security agencies can continue to do their work.

I want to focus on a specific definition in the act. The previous definition of "terrorist propaganda" included the words "advocates or promotes". The new definition of terrorist propaganda replaces those words with the word "counselling". I am concerned that this definitional change would have a big impact on the type of propaganda that can be produced by terrorist cells and movements that promote and also entice lone-wolf attacks, some of the most difficult types of cases to stop.

I would like to hear from the member why this change was made and how this change would help the government stop terrorist propaganda from being propagated across social media channels like YouTube.

● (1820)

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for focusing this debate on this more narrow public policy question of when we impinge upon free speech and criminalize free speech or protect against speech. That is obviously something Canadians are very concerned about, and that is one of the areas, again, I heard about at the door. Canadians want to know that they can engage in respectful debate. They want to make sure that the broadest amount of free speech that does not trip into the areas of hate speech and types of criminal speech will be allowed.

This is a very tough balance and may be one of the areas where the differences among the three parties most strongly emerge. I can see, with respect to the amendments proposed by the Conservatives, that the definition of the words "advocate and promote" versus "counsel" is more nuanced, perhaps, than I can get to in the short time for questions and comments. However, on the balance, I will say that I believe that this is where the Liberals had the trust of Canadians on this issue in the election and that we have struck the right balance here. I appreciate that it is a very fine point. Perhaps there are people in the hon. member's riding who obviously feel the way he does. He is sitting in this House today. The position of the Conservatives now on ths point reflects their position in the previous Parliament.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since my colleague just spent most of his time talking about consultations, my question will relate to that.

The expression that comes to mind is "enough already". The people I represent know that I support consultation. I have been taking part in citizen engagement exercises since I was a teenager. I definitely encouraged that when I was a municipal councillor. However, the people I represent believe that the Liberal government's excessive use of consultations is a way to put off making decisions, to stall for time, to avoid taking a position on controversial subjects, and to drag things out. We now find ourselves voting so much because there was nothing to vote on for so long.

Does my colleague not think there comes a point when enough is enough? A balance needs to be struck between consulting and taking a position. Consulting is all well and good, but governing is about making tough choices.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Speaker, I find my colleague's question a little strange because, most of the time, the New Democrats are asking us to consult more. Now they are saying that we are consulting too much and that we are passing too much or not enough legislation.

For this bill, we did three months of consultations. We studied the bill and discussed amendments at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Nearly a year and a half after the consultations, we now have the opportunity to deliberate on a good piece of legislation. Now we have an opportunity to send it to the Senate. Holding consultations and using them to draft a good bill was the right thing to do.

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the debate on Bill C-59 now that the government has forced the final hours of debate and shut down the ability of members of Parliament to contribute to it.

The committee report on this legislation only came out on May 3, and we had one day of debate on May 28. It is interesting to note that the government now wants to rush this legislation as quickly as possible through Parliament now that this session is coming to a close.

I want to take the debate to a higher level and talk about the threat of terrorism, because it is one of the greatest threats of our time. I want to talk a bit about Canada's experience with terrorist cells and terrorist activity and then perhaps finish with a bit on committee procedure, committee deliberations, and the issue of free speech, since I asked the member for St. John's East for the definition of "terrorist propaganda".

The definition I would like to use comes from one of the NATO handbooks, the AAP-06 glossary of terms and definitions, the 2014 edition. It says that terrorist propaganda is "The unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence against individuals or property in an attempt to coerce or intimidate governments or societies to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives." Those last three criteria or considerations I have often seen defined in different ways. Each American agency defines them in a slightly different way, and our agencies do the same.

Basically, it is about non-state actors, non-states using violence for an ideological, religious, or political goal. These are always their objectives, which is why it was so easy to label al Qaeda a terrorist organization. Many governments around the world were also able to do so quite simply. Al Qaeda is not religiously inspired, but it used religion as an excuse for its political goal, which was the removal of American forces in Saudi Arabia and across the Middle East.

There are many other terrorist groups. In the past 150 years or so, non-state actors have played a role in terrorist activity. Oftentimes we say that terrorism is new, that this has never happened before. I want to dispel that idea.

Piracy on the high seas, piracy within territorial waters, can and has been compared a lot of times to a form of terrorism. They are not typically privateers. They do not exist nowadays. It is a form of political violence. It is sometimes motivated by economic factors and sometimes by political factors.

The Baader-Meinhof gang in Germany of the 1960s and 1970s was basically the Red Army Faction. It was a Marxist or communist-inspired terrorist cell that robbed banks and shot government officials in Germany. It was well recognized for using terrorist tactics and strategies to achieve its political aims.

In 1919-1920 the anarchist bombings in the United States took place. Too often we are quick to say that terrorism is a new thing, but at the turn of the 19th century and the beginning of the 1900s, anarchist cells and anarchist movements were a very popular source of political agitation, as well as violent agitation.

In these particular cases, cells were responsible for the postmaster general attacks on members of the U.S. cabinet. They were responsible for attacks on governors and state legislatures. There is actually quite a long list of attacks that were carried out by them.

In the 1920s, we had a bombing and arson campaign here in Canada by the Freedomites, also called the Svobodniki, which were Russian-inspired terrorist cells. It was a terrorist network that undertook violence on a large scale for political goals. It was put down at the time by the state security apparatus that we had back then.

Closer to today, the Palestine Liberation Organization, or the PLO, participated in airline hijackings. That was an issue in the sixties and seventies. Airline hijackings were taking place all over the world. They became a major issue. That was far before my time, but we can read about them in textbooks. Many documentaries have been written about them. It was a plague all across the European continent and in the Middle East. Stopping hijackers was always a concern of security agencies. They did not know how to tell a hijacker apart from a tourist, or someone on a business trip, or someone travelling for personal reasons, or any reason really. That was a great difficulty at the time.

● (1825)

We have always had to struggle between charter rights and civil liberties and the security needs of our citizens.

In the regard, I often hear Liberals say they are the party of the charter and that they are striking the right balance. In this country, we have a longer inheritance of natural rights that were formalized in the Magna Carta in 1215. Later, they were annulled by Pope Innocent III and brought back one more time. They stayed with us as rights given to us just because of who we are. Our inherent humanity gives us those rights.

I want to caution members on the other side when referencing the charter. Our rich tradition of liberty goes far beyond the last 30 or 40 years. Our rights are not given to us by the charter. They are guaranteed to us by our innate humanity. In this country, thanks to our British common law, they are guaranteed by the Magna Carta. We have to strike the right balance in Bill C-59, and I just do not see our having achieved that in the effort to assure ourselves of our own security.

The great leaps in technology allow our citizens to travel quite easily. They can be in another country within one day, even in Europe, and that ease of travel, ease of communication, and ease of financing and transferring funds has also made it possible for those who would do us great harm to take advantage of it in ways that can harm our fellow citizens, and harm the state property that we pay for and that exists for the public good, and damage our airports and malls. A very popular form of terrorism in eastern Africa is attacking shopping malls. Shoppers are the targets of terrorist cells, such as al Shabaab.

I have deep concerns that Bill C-59 would not achieve that goal. As I asked in a previous question about the specific definition of "terrorist propaganda", I am concerned about protecting free speech. It is deeply important, but I feel it is very hypocritical of the government, on one side, to say it is going to protect free speech and modify the definition of "terrorist propaganda", and, on the other side, with the Canada summer jobs program, say that if Canadians wish to apply for it but have a spiritual, intellectual, or ethical disagreement with the government, they will be denied funding from the beginning. That is hypocrisy, and it has to be called out.

In consideration of this bill at committee, there were 29 amendments moved by Conservative members. Every single one of those was voted down. In 2015, when Bill C-51 was being considered, the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, the member for Beauce, and two former members, Denis Lebel and Christian Paradis, all received threats at their offices. It speaks to how intense this issue was back in 2015 when this legislation was initially introduced as Bill C-51. I am glad that a great deal of it was kept by the Liberal government. Indeed, the Liberals voted for it at the time, although they sometimes seem to imply that they reject its content but accept mere modifications to it.

I am hoping, though, that the government will see the light and change its mind about trying to ram this through in the late hours of this spring session when there are only a mere few days to allow other members of Parliament to speak on behalf of their constituents. Public consultation is one thing, but it cannot replace the work we do here on behalf of our constituents.

I would be remiss if I did not end with this: When God wants people to suffer, he sends them too much understanding. It is a Yiddish proverb, and quite an old one. It says that the more knowledge we gain, the more problems we typically have, and the more suffering comes upon us, because when we know more, it is incumbent upon us to do better and take actions based on information that we have received. I do not believe the government is striking the right balance.

As I said, the new definition of "terrorist propaganda" that only mentions counselling a person to do so does not achieve the aim of getting social media companies to remove propaganda promoting terrorist ideologies that result in lone-wolf attacks. I am not as concerned about organized crime or organized terrorist cells as I am about lone-wolf attacks, the people inspired to act on behalf of an organization overseas that is not directly counselling them to do so, but promoting and advocating a system of beliefs of political violence for an ideological, religious, or political aims.

I will be voting against this bill because it has too many defects, whereas Bill C-51 has far fewer.

● (1830)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from Calgary Shepard, whom I like a great deal, was not here in the 41st Parliament. Therefore, he does not recognize the fragility of the glass house in which he now stands when claiming that this bill has been forced through.

I remember Bill C-51. I remember when it was tabled at first reading on January 30, 2015, a Friday morning. I took it home on the weekend. I came back here on February 2 knowing that I had never seen anything quite as draconian introduced in the Canadian Parliament. We opposed it. We worked hard on it. At least I was the first member of Parliament to declare it to be a threat not just to our liberties, but also that made us less safe because it entrenched the worst effects of the separation of law, spy agencies, and law enforcement.

Bill C-51 is a dangerous piece of legislation that was forced through. There was no public consultation. It was introduced at first reading on January 30, it was through this place by May 6, and through the Senate by June 9. This piece of legislation has been before us a full year. Therefore, I am afraid that my hon. colleague is shooting at the wrong target when he thinks this bill has been forced through.

It is not as good as I would like it to be. The member is right that it does not do away with all of the things that were problematic in Bill C-51. However, I will be voting for Bill C-59, because it does a lot to redress the threat to our security from Bill C-51, which ignored all the recommendations of the Air India inquiry and the Maher Arar inquiry, and represented the worst entrenchment of the kinds of siloed agency thinking that, in the words of former Justice John Major, who chaired the Air India inquiry, make us less safe.

● (1835)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, obviously, I will disagree with the member. I believe this piece of legislation keeps those silos. That is the problem. The former director of CSIS made that point, that this keeps many of those silos, restructures them, and does not achieve those security goals. Therefore, I differ with the member on the context of the bill and the goals it will achieve. That is why I will be voting against the bill: because it will not keep us safe. The previous version of the bill, although not perfect, reached that goal far better than Bill C-59 will.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleague talked about some of the amendments we proposed, which he thought would help bring this bill to a better place. Could he maybe speak in general terms about what should have been accepted as amendments, and how they would have improved the bill?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, the member is right. There were 29 amendments proposed. Many of them dealt with assuring ourselves that our security agencies would have the information they needed to be able to conduct their investigations and to disrupt terrorist networks.

One thing I will mention is that there are provisions in the legislation where the intelligence commissioner, I think is the title, would not be able to look at things such as FINTRAC. Having sat on the Standing Committee on Finance, I know that FINTRAC collects a large volume of financial information on the activities of Canadians to try to deter and detect fraud and money laundering operations, much of which is done by those who would support, promote, and advocate terrorism and who finance these types of activities. Those are some of the failings I see here, where the Liberals did not accept a single one of our amendments that would have assured us there would be more information-sharing between our agencies.

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as members know, Bill C-59 is an act to enhance Canada's national security while safeguarding the rights and freedoms of Canadians. It is a bill that is extremely important to constituents in my riding of Brampton West, who were really concerned about the problematic elements of the Harper Conservatives' Bill C-51.

I held many consultations and town halls in my riding of Brampton West and heard the concerns of my constituents. This bill strikes the right balance between protecting the safety of Canadians and enhancing and protecting their rights and freedoms.

Does the hon. member or his constituents agree with at least some elements of this bill?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, regarding the contents of this particular bill, my constituents have mixed feelings. It is a complex piece of legislation, and they are not all experts. Some of them have contacted me and pointed out specific sections of Bill C-59 that they have deep concerns about, both on the civil liberties side, as some have said, and on the security side, in terms of agencies being able to share certain information between them. There are mixed feelings.

After much thought about the contents of the bill, I simply do not believe it achieves the right balance between information sharing and our civil liberties, and assuring ourselves that our security agencies can do the job we are asking them to do.

• (1840)

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-59, the Liberal government's national security legislation. Some may argue that this bill has been mislabelled, that it does not focus on security as much as administration, oversight, and regulations. The bill certainly did not rise to the expectations of national security experts who appeared before the committee. Perhaps this could be called a civil liberties bill, since we heard from twice as many lawyers and civil activists at committee as we did experts in national security.

As I have said in the House before, public safety and national security should be the top priority of the House, and should be above politics so that the safety and security of Canadians are put ahead of political fortunes. While the Liberals have said that public safety is a priority, they have said that everything is their top priority. To have 300 top priorities is really to have no priorities at all.

Under this lack of direction and leadership, we have seen Canada's national security be weakened and derail. The Liberals are eroding the safety and security of our communities, undermining our economic prosperity, and ripping at our societal fabric through divisive politics. Under the criminal justice reforms, they are watering down sentences for criminal charges like assault with a weapon, driving under the influence, joining a terrorist organization, human trafficking, and bribing an official, just to name a very few. Therefore, under the Liberals, violent and dangerous offenders will serve lighter sentences and face less scrutiny than a diabetic seeking a government tax credit, for example.

To combat gangs and gun violence, the Liberals promised $327 million for police task forces and other initiatives. They announced that funding shortly before the by-election in Surrey, where gang violence is a real problem. Seven months later, police and others are still waiting for the money to start flowing. They are still asking, "Where is it?" Apparently, combatting gangs and gun violence is not enough of a priority to get the money into the hands of those fighting the very issues that are plaguing Canadians, and that is gangs and gun violence.

Under C-59, the Liberals appear to be pushing Canada back to an era when national security agencies withheld information and information sharing led to disasters like the Air India bombing. The former CSIS director, Dick Fadden, noted at committee that the numerous and unnecessary use of privacy and charter references meant that career public servants, which includes national security officials, would cool to information sharing. He described a nightmare scenario as one where the government knew of an attack and did not act because one part of the government did not share that information. Bill C-59 would push Canada back into the days of silos and potentially puts Canadians at risk to espionage, terrorism, and cybercrimes.

Bill C-59 is certainly increasing the risk to our country. First is the heightened oversight, which can be good when done well. However, when we put multiple layers of oversight, fail to clearly show how those organizations will work together, and provide no new funding for the new administration created, resources are shifting from security personnel working to keep Canada safe to administration and red tape.

Let us be clear. Bill C-59 puts in place cuts to our national security and intelligence agencies. Agencies that already state they can only work on the top threats to our country and have to ignore lesser threats due to lack of resources will now have even fewer resources. Does that mean that one of the top threats posing a threat to our communities and our country will have get less resources devoted to it?

In November, I asked how much the implementation of Bill C-59 would cost, and was promised a quick answer. I did receive that answer, but the 170 words I got back took eight months to provide and came only after the committee had reported Bill C-59 back to the House. The total cost of the new oversight and compliance is nearly $100 million, $97.3 million over five years. That is moving $100 million from protecting to Canadians to administrative red tape.

• (1845)

However, it is not just the money that is weakening Canada's community safety. It is the watering down of tools for police. In Bill C-59, the Liberals would make it harder for police and the crown to get warrants against known security threats. If police agencies are aware of a threat, they can get a recognizance order, a warrant to monitor that person issued by a judge.

The Liberals would raise the bar on known threats being monitored by police and security agencies, but who benefits from this? The only people I can think of are criminals and terrorists who would do us harm. Making it harder for police to act on threats does not help the middle class, the rich, or the poor. It makes life harder on police and those working to stop crime and keep our country safe. Again, it erodes public safety and hurt honest, hard-working, law-abiding Canadians.

We heard very clearly from members of the Jewish community that they were very concerned about eliminating the promotion of terrorism provision as set out in Bill C-59. In 2017, for the third year in a row, there were record numbers of hate crimes against the Jewish community, yet the Liberals would eliminate a Criminal Code provision for making promoting and advocating terrorism illegal. With increased hate crimes, they would allow ISIS to call for violence, and lone-wolf attacks on YouTube and other videos, while continuing to be immune from prosecution.

I know Canadians do not support this. Canadians do not want to see Canada be the new home of radical terrorism and ISIS terrorists. However, right now, with no prosecution of ISIS fighters and terrorists returning home, no penalties for inciting hate and violence, and being the only western country with unprotected borders, we well may have a major crisis on our hands in the future.

Putting Canadians second to their political virtue-signalling and to social justice causes seems to run throughout the Liberal government's actions. The Liberals do not serve Canadians, only their self-interests. Bill C-59 seems to be rife with Liberal virtue signalling and social justice. Protest, advocacy, and artistic expression are all recognized in the Anti-terrorism Act as legitimate activities so long as they are not coupled with violent or criminal actions. However, the Liberals felt it necessary to insert this into an omnibus bill over and over again.

There were over 300 proposed amendments, with the Liberals only voting in favour of one opposition amendment, and that from the NDP. It was one that closely resembled another Liberal amendment. Therefore, we know, from sitting through weeks of witness testimony and debate, that the fix was in and the minister's promise of "openness to anything that improves public safety" was a hollow promise.

Under Bill C-59, the Liberals have proposed a Henry VIII clause. This is where the executive branch is granted the full authorities of Parliament, effectively usurping the role of Parliament to speak for Canadians. Such powers are usually very rare and are given for specific emergencies and crisis. Convenience, I would note, is not a crisis or emergency, and the Liberals should remember that the House approves legislation, not the executive.

Even simple and straightforward amendments were rejected. The commissioner who was slated to become the new intelligence commissioner noted that selecting his replacement from only retired judges severely restricted an already small pool and recommended that like him, sitting federal judges could be appointed on condition of their retirement.

If I have learned anything from the bill, it is that Canadians cannot rely on the Liberals to uphold their interests, put public safety and national security a priority, and that for the Liberals, politics comes ahead of good governance.

Our security risks are real and present danger to Canadians. Issues like returning ISIS terrorist are complex, and solutions are not simple. However, pretending the issue is irresponsible and negligent. Under the bill, it would be easy to surmise that the Liberals are more concerned with CSIS's compliance to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms than with prosecuting terrorists for significant crimes.

Canada is going to be weaker with Bill C-59, and far weaker when the Liberals leave office than when they entered office. Their wedge politics on the values test, pandering to terrorists, ignoring threats from China, targeting law-abiding guns owners, lack of leadership on illegal border crossers, and waffling on resource development continue to put Canadians at a disadvantage.

Real national security issues were raised at committee, but little in Bill C-59 actually deals with new and emerging threats to Canada's public safety.

To echo the former special forces commander, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Day suggested at committee that the debate and conversations around protecting Canadians was important and needed to continue. However, when asked about his confidence of the bill before us getting Canada ready for new and emerging threats, his answer was "zero". Coincidentally, that is the same confidence I have in the minister and the Liberal government to get Bill C-59 right: zero.

● (1850)

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while I have tremendous respect for my colleague opposite, I was deeply troubled by some of the commentary that ran throughout his speech, particularly the commentary about social justice and civil liberties being no more than simply virtue signalling. Human rights, civil liberties, and social justice are fundamental principles are important to me. They underpin what it means to live in a free and democratic Canada.

The fact is that a civil liberties bill could also be a national security bill at the same time and this concept of having to balance one against the other is so deeply troubling to me. With terms as heavy as national security and terrorism, it is easy to sweep human rights under the rug, and that is not the Canada in which I want to live.

I would like to focus on one comment that my colleague mentioned about information sharing. Have we learned nothing from the Arar inquiry? Is it not essential to ensure that if this information is going to be shared, it is, at a bare minimum, reliable so we do not repeat our mistakes of the past and have innocent Canadian citizens tortured?

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, I have the same sentiments of respect for my colleague's skill sets and what he brings to the House. I would agree that it is very possible to have a national security bill that balances the rights and freedoms of Canadians with the need to protect national security and public safety. However, Bill C-59 would not do that in the way it should.

I would contend that although some would suggest we have maybe swung the pendulum the other way, national security experts at committee, the rare few we were able to get to committee and were approved by the current government, suggested the current structure being proposed in Bill C-59 would do more harm to the information sharing my friend suggested, that we would be going backward from where we were, and that there was more of a likelihood of siloing of information protection between government agencies. We had the former director of CSIS tell us that his concern with Bill C-59 was that we had the perfect storm, potentially. He feared that one government agency would know of an imminent threat and would not be able to tell another government agency to protect us from it, and that was the potential with Bill C-59. That is alarming.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner shares the NDP's concerns or if he is satisfied with the requirement in the bill for oversight mechanisms, including the new national security and intelligence review agency and the intelligence commissioner. Is the member satisfied with replacing the Security Intelligence Review Committee, which has been around for quite some time, with this new agency, and bringing back the intelligence commissioner? We used to have an inspector general. Is the member satisfied with the oversight and review mechanisms created under Bill C-59?

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, there are some good things in Bill C-59. If we talk to those who took part in the creation of Bill C-51, the government moved sections around in Bill C-51, added some lipstick to it, and it became Bill C-59. One improvement is the oversight. If not handled appropriately, the oversight could become an administrative burden. Rather than money going to fight national security, it could go to administrative issues, like I explained. We should combine the committee of parliamentarians, which is part of the oversight for national security, and add the new layers in Bill C-59.

It talked to my former colleagues who were part of creating Bill C-51. They think that is a step in the right direction and we should be very supportive of this component. However, not everything in Bill C-59 will be supported by members on my side of the House.

● (1855)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish I could say that I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-59 this evening. However, I have to admit that what I am really feeling is more a sense of disappointment.

That is because, first of all, there is very little difference between the previous Conservative government's Bill C-51 and the Liberal government's Bill C-59. They certainly have a lot in common. Not only do they look disturbingly alike, but they were also handled much the same way.

Those who were here in the previous Parliament will remember that Bill C-51 was kind of rushed through, the better to capitalize on Canadians' strong emotional response to an increasing number of terrorist attacks, which continue to this day. There was hardly what could be considered a full debate.

As I recall, when discussions were in their infancy, the NDP was the only party resolutely opposed to Bill C-51. The government was trying to sell the idea that we had to compromise between keeping Canadians safe, which is every government's top priority, and protecting the Charter rights and freedoms we are all entitled to.

From the outset, the NDP said we should not be seeking a compromise. Rather, we should bring about an evolution with respect to these two fundamental aspects of Canadian rights that belong to every individual.

I feel like the government is taking a similar approach with Bill C-59 now. When we are debating a bill as important as this one, there should be no reason for a time allocation motion that limits MPs' right to speak.

The 338 members of the House represent 35 million Canadians. Each one of those MPs has something to say about this. They are all concerned about the prospect of terrorist attacks here and elsewhere, in people's workplaces, or while they are on vacation. This issue is on the minds of all Canadians, and the best and only way for them to be heard by the government is here in the House. Even so, the government is limiting the time for debate.

Members will also recall that when the NDP took a firm stand against Bill C-51, the Liberals, who were in opposition at the time, pulled a rabbit out of their hat by essentially saying that they would vote in favour of Bill C-51 in order to replace it when they formed the government. If they want to replace a bill, they should vote against it. I may have been inexperienced at that time. The Conservatives' position was clear, the NDP's position was clear, and the Liberals' position was clear.

Over time, and in light of what the Liberal government has done in the past, I can clearly see that they tend to do things a certain way. For example, during the election campaign, this same government sincerely promised to reform our electoral system. As the months passed, this changed to a minor revision of certain election rules, but the overhaul of the electoral system was forgotten.

These same Liberals promised to cut taxes for the middle class. I admit that we may not have been in agreement on what the middle class is, because where I come from, the median salary is about $32,000 a year. To access the tax cuts, the threshold is at least $45,000 a year. Those who really benefit are people like me, who have a salary that is more than decent. How have middle-class taxes been cut? I am still struggling to understand that. These same Liberals promised to axe the EI reform that the Conservatives put in place to give people some time to recover when tragedy strikes.

● (1900)

At the moment, the figures are the same as during the Conservative era. Roughly six out of 10 Canadians who pay into EI do not qualify for benefits when times get tough. I could keep listing examples in almost every field. It is clear that this is a Liberal way to approach the big issues.

We could talk about greenhouse gas reduction, for example. "Canada is back" was the message trumpeted at the Paris conference. I thought that meant Canada was back on the world stage, but I later realized it meant Canada is at the back of the pack and staying there. That is the Liberal approach.

To sum up the issue at hand, Bill C-59 still has many flaws. I will give you some examples. The Liberals are using this bill to establish a legal framework that would allow the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS, to store sensitive metadata on completely innocent Canadians. This is a practice that has already been rejected by the Federal Court. To back up my statements, and to show that this is not just my personal opinion, but based on testimony from people far better informed than me, allow me to quote Daniel Therrien. For those who have not heard of him, he is the Privacy Commissioner of Canada. He testified before the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics on November 22, 2016, and said:

> Think of the recent judgment by the Federal Court that found that CSIS had unlawfully retained the metadata of a large number of law-abiding individuals who are not threats to national security because CSIS felt it needed to keep that information for analytical purposes.
>
> These are not theoretical risks. These are real things, real concerns. Do we want a country where the security service has a lot of information about most citizens with a view to detecting national security threats? Is that the country we want to live in?
>
> We have seen real cases in which CSIS had in its bank of information the information about many people who did not represent a threat. Is that the country we want?

We can already see that things have gotten out of hand, and there is a question that has people increasingly worried, as it pertains not only to the issue being debated this evening, but also to all this personal data that is being asked of us and that we often send against our will on the Internet. The question is: how will we protect this personal information? Because if it is truly personal, that means that it belongs to someone, and that someone is the only person that can consent to its use.

That is not the only problem. I see that I am running out of time, so instead of naming the problems, I will summarize the proposals presented by the NDP. The first was to completely repeal Bill C-51 and replace the current ministerial directive on the matter of torture to ensure that Canada stands for an absolute prohibition on torture. Absolute means that we will not allow through the back door what we would not allow to enter through the front door.

Based on what I have heard in the House today, all the parties agree and everyone is against torture. However, some parties seem to be saying that they might use the information obtained through torture by other countries if that information seemed pertinent. History has made it abundantly clear that not only is torture inhumane, but in most cases, the information turns out to be false, precisely because it was obtained by torture. I imagine that I would be willing to say just about anything if I were being tortured.

● (1905)

In closing, between Bill C-59 and Bill C-51, we still have a long way to go. Under time allocation, I simply cannot vote in favour of this bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know that the Liberals have been working hard to enhance public security, as they like to say, and yet I do not see much in this bill that does that.

Under the previous Conservative government, resources for the RCMP and CSIS were increased by one-third. Could the member comment on whether he thinks the current Liberal government is taking serious action to protect our national security, or whether it is engaging in ideological pandering?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. There are a few positive aspects to the bill, enough to lead people to believe that this is a step in the right direction. However, as I often say, taking one step forward does not get you anywhere. You need to take two, three, or four steps forward and come to a consensual solution.

Some of the measures in the bill that we do support include improving review and oversight mechanisms by creating the national security and intelligence review agency and enacting the intelligence commissioner act. This is an important Liberal measure that is long overdue. It is not perfect, but here is a situation where I will not take an ideological approach and I will support the Liberal government.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Trois-Rivières for his excellent speech and for his clarifications on Bill C-59, in particular the reasons why this bill does not meet Canadians' expectations.

His first reason has to do with the no-fly list and the unacceptable delays in funding a redress mechanism. The NDP has long been working closely with No Fly List Kids, which seeks to fix the fact that children unfortunately end up on no-fly lists because they have the same name as criminals who are banned from air travel.

The government could have produced a much better bill by developing a redress mechanism that would finally allow all Canadian citizens to be free to travel as they wish. It is not right that people experience problems because they have the same name as someone else.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Drummond for his very relevant point, which could even apply to another bill we are waiting on from the Liberal government, to protect air passengers with a bill of rights.

Even the omnibus transport bill does not yet contain a bill of rights to protect the rights of air passengers and offer redress when these rights are violated.

When people are not allowed to fly because they have the same name as someone on the list, it causes huge inconveniences, especially when it happens to children. It happens most often during family vacations and not when a child is travelling alone. This is another reason why the government should ensure that airlines do their best to eliminate duplications on the no-fly list.

● (1910)

[*English*]

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on Bill C-59. I hope my hon. colleagues will indulge me over the course of the next 10 minutes. I am not fearmongering, but I want to talk about a snapshot in my life that fundamentally changed the way I look at things.

Everybody knows, as I have related this a number of times, that I worked in aviation for over 20 years on the airline side and on the regulatory side with Transport Canada, as well as on the airport side and in the consulting world. I know exactly where I was at 5:46 a.m. B.C. time on September 11, 2001. That was exactly when American Airlines flight 11 crashed into the World Trade Centre building. At 9:03, United Airlines flight 175 crashed into another World Trade Centre building, and at 9:37, American Airlines flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon. Then at 10:07, flight 93 crashed into a field in Somerset, Pennsylvania. These incidents killed all of the people on board those aircraft, as well as over 3,000 people on the ground.

Up to that point, I would say that we had a different mindset. As was the case in the U.S., in Canada we lost our innocence. The world really lost its innocence. We started to see terrorism in a different light. We started looking at how it could have happened.

Let me talk about that day. Immediately after the first aircraft hit the first tower, my phone started to ring. I was one of the managers at Prince George Airport, and our job at that time was to scramble to get to the airport and figure out what was going on. We were to monitor all of the security information that was coming in. Many people probably do not know that for the first few hours of this crisis, Canadians were at the helm of monitoring the crisis at the NORAD centre.

I can tell members that it was something else. It brings me right back to it when we started talking about this.

Prior to that, my role in aviation on the airline side, and then again on the airport side, was to work with inner agencies to determine how we could protect and prepare our airlines and airports in cases of disaster. At that point, it was about preventing criminal organizations from transporting drugs and smuggling people.

It was quite staggering to think that an airliner would be used to crash into a building. We never thought that would happen. We live in a different world.

After 9/11, Canada adopted its very first anti-terrorism law, and we started to look at things a little differently. We started to look at how our security organizations, those groups that were tasked with protecting Canadians, shared their information. We started to look at our industries, whether aviation, roads, marine systems, rail, or logistics.

● (1915)

How did we protect those areas? How did we protect our ports and airports? How did we protect Canadians and Americans coming across the border? We looked at things as whether it would be better to do away with that northern border. That is what the U.S. calls it. Do we start considering, perhaps, a perimeter border all around North America, Canada, and the U.S.? We could really work at interoperability in its best sense, with the sharing of data and key information that would protect our citizens so that we could prevent any other terrorist attack.

I have probably said already that we live in a completely different world. I get a little hot when we talk about this, and I am just going to bring us back to April 23 of this year in Toronto. There was a van attack in which 10 people lost their lives and many more were injured. Let us talk about the high school students in Canada who are being radicalized and are going overseas to serve with ISIS or other terrorist groups. Let us talk about the events that we do not know about.

We can have this flowery idea that we live in a safe world and everything is good, because the people who are tasked with protecting us are stopping these events before we know about them.

What Bill C-59 does is to limit the Canadian Security Intelligence Service's ability to reduce terrorist threats. It limits the ability of government departments to share data amongst themselves to protect national security. It removes the offence of advocating and promoting terrorism offences in general.

One of the other areas, as if that were not enough, is that CSIS, the agency that we task to protect us and make sure that domestic and international threats are minimized, and the RCMP are not allowed to use social media. They are not allowed to use any public data, potentially. They cannot use that. What if the person who is going to use a van for an attack said, "I am going to do this" on a Facebook page a day or two before he did it. Can the RCMP use that information, or does it have to wait, and perhaps come before some politicians to see if it is possible to stop the attack?

In the study and amendment stage of this bill, in part 3 of the bill dealing with restrictions on security and intelligence and the assessment of publicly available data, the Liberals put additional barriers on the use of public information. They said that the collection of public information, from social media like Facebook and Twitter, would be restricted. How are these people finding out about recruitment?

What about the high school shootings? Students are talking on Facebook about what they want to do. Bill C-59 is going to limit those agencies that we task with protecting us from using that to stop it.

It is shameful that we are talking at this point, after all we know, in terms of terrorist groups. Here is a report that just came out, an internal CSIS report that was leaked or somehow made public. It says that domestic extremists are likely to continue to target Canadian uniformed personnel and related installations in neighbourhoods that are familiar to them, like police stations and military recruitment centres. This was from January 24, 2018. It was in the newspaper.

We have to be doing everything to protect Canadians and to make sure that Canadians are safe. We should not be trying to work in some information vacuum. That is exactly what this is. Regardless of whether academics are saying this or that, what are the security agencies, those who are tasked with protecting us, saying about Bill C-59? They have serious concerns. We should not be making it harder for them to do their job of protecting Canadians.

● (1920)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I also turn my mind back to September 11, 2001, where the member started his speech and I can share with him. He remembers that there were Canadians controlling NORAD. A constituent of mine in my Rotary Club, Captain Mike Jelinek, was in command of what they call "the mountain" in Colorado at NORAD. It is an extraordinary story. Can anyone imagine being in more of a crucible of decision-making stress and yet keeping control? One of the things that a lot of people do not know, but that he shared with me, and it is public information, was why those in charge did not scramble military jets to shoot down the planes the hijackers had taken control of to aim at buildings. They could not because the hijacking terrorists had turned off the transponders. Therefore, what they saw on their radar was just a sea of dots, but the ones that were actually the hijacked planes had disappeared from view. That is why they had to make all of the planes in the airspace land, so they could then see what was going on. It is a very complex story.

I differ with my friend on Bill C-59. I was here for the debates on Bill C-51. I learned a lot from the security experts who testified at the committee. None of that advice was taken up by the previous government, but I will cite one piece of testimony that came before the Senate. Joe Fogarty is the name of a British security expert, actually a spy for the Brits, who had been doing work with Canada at the time. He told us stories of things that had already happened, such as when the RCMP knew of a terrorist plotters' camp but did not want to tell CSIS, or CSIS knew of something and did not want to tell the RCMP.

John Major, the judge who ran the Air India inquiry, told us that passing Bill C-51 would make us less safe unless we had pinnacle control, some agency or entity that oversaw what all five of our spy agencies were doing. Bill C-59 would take us in the right direction by creating the security agency that will allow us to know what each agency is doing, because the way human nature is, and we heard this from experts, is that people will not share information, and Bill C-59 would help us in that regard.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, our hon. colleague speaks of that day. About two years after that day, I was representing Canada at the centennial of flight and I had the honour of being with some of our Canadian Snowbirds. One of the pilots I was with that night and I were talking about 9/11. One of the stories people do not tell is that there was a 747, loaded, coming over from Asia. It was right over Whitehorse and it was going to land at our airport, but we did not know whether there were terrorists on board. Our hon. colleague is correct. We did not know whether there was one aircraft coming or more aircraft that were coming loaded with terrorists. There was a lot of uncertainty. I relayed this story about the 747 and that we were preparing and scrambling all of the emergency vehicles. At one point, I said that it was very close to being shot down, and this pilot said, "It was literally seconds away because we were the jets that were scrambled and I was one of the jets that was scrambled beside this." The threats are very real.

To the hon. colleague's comment, there is a lot going on that we do not know about. That is because we trust our organizations that when we go to bed at night, they will be doing their job and making sure that we are safe and sound, but they are sharing that information. I offered this, and our hon. colleague mentioned Air India and the sharing of data.

We must make sure that there is interoperability. I will remind folks very quickly in my closing remarks that everything we do in Canada impacts our relationships with our friends across the way. If we weaken our security laws here, we are going to see retaliatory measures on the other side whether in respect to goods or people. We need to make sure we are in lockstep with all of our partners, whether North American or international, in terms of security.

• (1925)

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-59, an act respecting national security matters. This is a massive omnibus bill, more than 140 pages long. It seeks to amend five existing acts with significant amendments. It introduces four new acts. It overhauls Canada's national security framework.

Having regard for the breadth and scope of the bill and the important subject matter it touches, namely Canada's national security, it is extremely disappointing that the government has done just about everything to shut down debate in the House, to prevent and limit the ability of members of Parliament to speak and debate this piece of legislation.

Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that the government is really quite embarrassed by this piece of legislation. Before there was even a second reading vote on the bill, as a result of changes to our Standing Orders, it went to committee, where it was torn to shreds. It was such a sloppy bill that 235 amendments were brought forward at committee, including 43 amendments from Liberal MPs. The bill falls short in many respects.

The threat of terrorism is real. We know that September 11 really did change the world. While September 11 is now nearly 17 years ago and for many an increasingly distant memory, the threat of terrorism in Canada is as real today as it was the day after September 11.

We have seen terrorist attacks on Canadian soil, including here on Parliament Hill a few years ago. Just last year, an Edmonton police officer, Mike Chernyk, was killed when he tackled a terrorist, who then tried to run down Edmontonians. By the way, Edmonton is a city that I am very proud to represent, and this really hit home for many of my constituents.

We know that the threat of terrorism is real, and we know that we need to give our security, intelligence, and law enforcement agencies all the tools possible to be able to disrupt terrorist plots, to stem the flow of financing to terrorist groups and terrorist actors, and ultimately to keep Canadians safe.

That is why our previous Conservative government brought Canada's anti-terrorism and national security laws into the 21st century with Bill C-51, legislation that, by the way, the Liberal Party, to its credit, supported. It is also true that the Liberals had some reservations about Bill C-51. During the last election, the Prime Minister promised that he would make revisions to Bill C-51, so we have Bill C-59, which is the government's response.

As I said, it falls short in a number of areas. Where it falls short is that instead of giving law enforcement and national security agencies more tools to keep Canadians safe, Bill C-59 takes away tools. What kinds of tools is Bill C-59 taking away that they otherwise had as a result of, among other measures, Bill C-51?

• (1930)

One of those tools is the ability of CSIS to carry out disruption activities without a warrant. Under Bill C-51, CSIS could undertake some very limited disruption activities, provided that those activities were consistent with Canadian law and respected the privacy rights of Canadians. Bill C-59 takes that tool away. In practical terms, what would that mean? One example would be that right now, as a result of Bill C-51, CSIS could contact the parents of a radicalized youth to seek parental intervention and advise them that their son or daughter has been radicalized. Under Bill C-59, CSIS would have to get a warrant. How does that make sense, and how does that make Canadians safer?

Another example would be to misdirect a potential terrorist who might be in the midst of carrying out a terrorist plot. Of course, in disrupting terrorist plots, time can so often be of the essence. It is not possible to run into court to get a warrant. Under Bill C-59, the government would be tying the hands of CSIS, even at a critical time when that could make a difference for stopping a terrorist attack by simply misdirecting the terrorist. How does that make sense, and how does that make Canadians safer?

There is another tool in the tool box that the government is taking away, namely preventive detention. It is true that it is not taking away the tool, in the sense that it is still there, but from a practical standpoint it is going to make preventative detention much more difficult. Preventative detention is an important tool. It is a tool that has been used and has kept Canadians safe. The threshold for law enforcement to use preventative detention is high. There must be evidence that using preventative detention would likely prevent a terrorist attack. Under Bill C-59, that threshold would be increased to detention being "necessary" to prevent a terrorist attack. Between "likely to prevent" and "necessary to prevent", the threshold has increased considerably. There is a big difference in that regard. What it means is that it would be much more difficult for law enforcement to use preventative detention, even when there is evidence that preventative detention would likely prevent a terrorist attack. Again, how does that make sense, and how does that make Canadians safer?

Another tool the government is limiting in a significant way for law enforcement is the tool of a peace bond, where there are no reasonable grounds to charge someone with a criminal offence, but there is sufficient evidence that the individual needs to be monitored and subject to conditions whereby if the individual violates the order, he or she could be subject to criminal charges. The threshold is that a peace bond be likely to prevent a terrorist attack from occurring. Just as the government has done with respect to preventative detention, it has increased that threshold to "necessary to prevent" a terrorist attack. It basically defeats the entire purpose of a peace bond, because the evidentiary threshold that the government has set is more or less as high as reasonable grounds, which would result in delaying criminal charges. How does that make sense, and how does that make Canadians safer?

• (1935)

For these and other reasons, we cannot support this bill, because it would take too many tools away from our law enforcement and intelligence agencies, and it would make Canadians less safe.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was here during the debate on Bill C-51, and it was a very different public atmosphere in terms of the types of comments we were receiving. There was a great outcry from Canadians in virtually all regions of the country saying that the government had gone too far. As the opposition party, even though we supported Bill C-51, part of our election platform was to make changes to it, and that is what Bill C-59 is all about. We also added the parliamentary standing committee on oversight of our agencies. We see it as a positive thing.

When I reflect today on what the public is saying, the opposition to Bill C-51 is quite profound, and there appears to be a fairly good consensus across the country in support of the bill before us. Could the member provide his thoughts on why that might be the case?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, before I address the question from the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, I just want to make one correction. I made reference to Mike Chernyk from EPS and inadvertently said that he was killed, but he was injured, and I want to correct the record with respect to that.

With respect to Bill C-51, it is true that the Liberals supported it, and it is true that their support was conditional on bringing subsequent changes. The problem is that the changes the government has brought forward would make Canadians less safe and take away important tools from law enforcement and from our intelligence agencies.

We on this side of the House are quite happy to work with the government in a non-partisan way on an issue that should not be partisan, which is the safety and security of Canadians. However, instead of striking the right balance between protecting the collective security of Canadians and protecting the rights and freedoms of Canadians, this legislation would tilt the balance in a way that undermines the ability of law enforcement and our security agencies.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy the trenchant analysis and passion of my friend from St. Albert—Edmonton, with whom I have the honour to serve on the justice committee.

The member spoke about Bill C-59 in comparison to Bill C-51, the Conservatives' bill. He suggested, if I can summarize, that as a result of the changes the law would make us less safe. He cited a number of examples, including the requirement of a warrant for disruption activities and changes to the preventative detention sections, among others.

The legislation is being redrafted, and some of the changes would make it less likely to be struck down under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which, of course, was the critique of so many when the Conservatives' bill was before Parliament. I wonder if it would have been more prudent, in fact, to make those changes to avoid the cost and delay of having those cases go before the courts only to find that these sections are unconstitutional. I would like the member's thoughts on that.

• (1940)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I believe that in most respects the sections in Bill C-51 are constitutional. Yes, they could be subject to challenge, but we have some serious concerns about the way in which the government has moved forward with amending several aspects of what had been Bill C-51. While I agree with the hon. member that there may be some concerns about certain sections and while in some cases it may be prudent to make some amendments and some changes, we do not believe that the government has done it the right way.

Another change that the government has introduced that causes us serious concern is with respect to promoting terrorist activity. That is another section that the Liberals have significantly reduced in scope, limiting it to counselling with respect to a specific act or a specific individual. Again, we think that the government has created a big loophole in that area. Instead of clamping down with those who are promoting terrorism, it is in fact going to give those on social media—

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I find myself surprised to have a speaking spot tonight. For that I want to thank the New Democratic Party. We do not agree about this bill, but it was a generous gesture to allow me to speak to it.

I have been very engaged in the issue of anti-terrorism legislation for many years. I followed it when, under Prime Minister Chrétien, the anti-terrorism legislation went through this place immediately after 9/11. Although I was executive director of the Sierra Club, I recall well my conversations with former MP Bill Blaikie, who sat on the committee, and we worried as legislation went forward that appeared to do too much to limit our rights as Canadians in its response to the terrorist threat.

That was nothing compared to what happened when we had a shooting, a tragic event in October 2014, when Corporal Nathan Cirillo was murdered at the National War Memorial. I do not regard that event, by the way, as an act of terrorism, but rather of one individual with significant addiction and mental health issues, something that could have been dealt with if he had been allowed to have the help he sought in British Columbia before he came to Ottawa and committed the horrors of October 22, 2014.

It was the excuse and the opening that the former government needed to bring in truly dangerous legislation. I will never forget being here in my seat in Parliament on January 30. It was a Friday morning. One does not really expect ground-shaking legislation to hit without warning on a Friday morning in this place. There was no press release, no briefing, no telling us what was in store for us. I picked up Bill C-51, an omnibus bill in five parts, and read it on the airplane flying home, studied it all weekend, and came back here. By Monday morning, February 2, I had a speaking spot during question period and called it the "secret police act".

I did not wait, holding my finger to the wind, to see which way the political winds were blowing. The NDP did that for two weeks before they decided to oppose it. The Liberals decided they could not win an election if they opposed it, so they would vote for it but promised to fix it later.

I am afraid some of that is still whirling around in this place. I will say I am supporting this effort. I am voting for it. I still see many failures in it. I know the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Safety have listened. That is clear; the work they did in the consultation process was real.

Let me go back and review why Bill C-51 was so very dangerous.

I said it was a bill in five parts. I hear the Conservatives complaining tonight that the government side is pushing Bill C-59 through too fast. Well, on January 30, 2015, Bill C-51, an omnibus bill in five parts, was tabled for first reading. It went all the way through the House by May 6 and all the way through the Senate by June 9, less than six months.

This bill, Bill C-59, was tabled just about a year ago. Before it was tabled, we had consultations. I had time to hold town hall meetings in my riding specifically on public security, espionage, our spy agencies, and what we should do to protect and balance anti-terrorism measures with civil liberties. We worked hard on this issue before the bill ever came for first reading, and we have worked hard on it since.

I will come back to Bill C-51, which was forced through so quickly. It was a bill in five parts. What I came to learn through working on that bill was that it made Canadians less safe. That was the advice from many experts in anti-terrorism efforts, from the leading experts in the trenches and from academia, from people like Professor Kent Roach and Professor Craig Forcese, who worked so hard on the Air India inquiry; the chair of the Air India inquiry, former judge John Major; and people in the trenches I mentioned earlier in debate tonight, such as Joseph Fogarty, an MI5 agent from the U.K. who served as anti-terrorism liaison with Canada.

What I learned from all of these people was Bill C-51 was dangerous because it would put in concrete silos that would discourage communication between spy agencies. That bill had five parts.

Part 1 was information sharing. It was not about information sharing between spy agencies; it was about information sharing about Canadians to foreign governments. In other words, it was dangerous to the rights of Canadians overseas, and it ignored the advice of the Maher Arar inquiry.

● (1945)

Part 2 was about the no-fly list. Fortunately, this bill fixes that. The previous government never even bothered to consult with the airlines, by the way. That was interesting testimony we got back in the 41st Parliament.

Part 3 I called the "thought chill" section. We heard tonight that the government is not paying attention to the need remove terrorist recruitment from websites. That is nonsense. However, part 3 of Bill C-51 created a whole new term with no definition, this idea of terrorism in general, and the idea of promoting terrorism in general. As it was defined, we could imagine someone would be guilty of violating that law if they had a Facebook page that put up an image of a clenched fist. That could be seen as promotion of terrorism in general. Thank goodness we got that improved.

In terms of thought chill, it was so broadly worded that it could have caused, for instance, someone in a community who could see someone was being radicalized a reasonable fear that they could be arrested if they went to talk to that person to talk them out of it. It was very badly drafted.

Part 4 is the part that has not been adequately fixed in this bill. This is the part that, for the first time ever, gave CSIS what are called kinetic powers.

CSIS was created because the RCMP, in response to the FLQ crisis, was cooking up plots that involved, famously, burning down a barn. As a result, we said intelligence gathering would have to be separate from the guys who go out and break up plots, because we cannot have the RCMP burning down barns, so the Canadian Security Intelligence Service was created. It was to be exclusively about collecting information, and then the RCMP could act on that information.

I think it is a huge mistake that in Bill C-59 we have left CSIS kinetic powers to disrupt plots. However, we have changed the law quite a bit to deal with CSIS's ability to go to a single judge to get permission to violate our laws and break the charter. I wish the repair in Bill C-59 was stronger, but it is certainly a big improvement on Bill C-51.

Part 5 of Bill C-51 is not repaired in Bill C-59. I think that is because it was so strangely worded that most people did not ever figure out what it was about. I know professors Roach and Forcese left part 5 alone because it was about changes to the immigration and refugee act. It really was hard to see what it was about. However, Professor Donald Galloway at the University of Victoria law school said part 5 is about being able to give a judge information in secret hearings about a suspect and not tell the judge that the evidence was obtained by torture, so I really hope the Minister of Public Safety will go back and look at those changes to the refugee and immigration act, and if that is what they are about, it needs fixing.

Let us look at why the bill is enough of an improvement that I am going to vote for it. By the way, in committee I did bring forward 46 amendments to the bill on my own. They went in the direction of ensuring that we would have special advocates in the room so that there would be someone there on behalf of the public interest when a judge was giving a warrant to allow a CSIS agent to break the law or violate the charter. The language around what judges can do and how often they can do it and what respect to the charter they must exercise when they grant such a warrant is much better in this bill, but it is still there, and it does worry me that there will be no special advocate in the room.

I cannot say I am wildly enthusiastic about Bill C-59, but it is a huge improvement over what we saw in the 41st Parliament in Bill C-51.

The creation of the security intelligence review agency is something I want to talk about in my remaining minutes.

This point is fundamental. This was what Mr. Justice John Major, who chaired the Air India inquiry, told the committee when it was studying the bill back in 2015: He told us it is just human nature that the RCMP and CSIS will not share information and that we need to have pinnacle oversight.

There is review that happens, and the term "review" is post facto, so SIRC, the Security Intelligence Review Committee, would look at what CSIS had done over the course of the year, but up until this bill we have never had a single security agency that watched what all the guys and girls were doing. We have CSIS, the RCMP, the Canada Border Services Agency, the Communications Security Establishment—five different agencies all looking at collecting intelligence, but not sharing. That is why having the security intelligence review agency created by this bill is a big improvement.

• (1950)

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member brings a lot of context to bear on some of the questions that were referred to earlier in comparing it to Bill C-59.

The member for Calgary Shepard actually asked me about a proposed amendment the Conservatives brought forward to Bill C-59 at committee about changing the word "promote" to the words "advocate" or "counsel". There was a brief moment in the member's speech when she referred to some reasons why that would not be a good amendment. Maybe she could elaborate on it. Her answer to the member for Calgary Shepard's question might be better than mine was.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, this was a very troubling provision about what kind of information posted on social media could lead to criminal charges and jail. Bill C-51 talked about the previously unknown concept of "terrorism in general". What did it mean? Nobody knew. The concept of promoting "terrorism", on the other hand, or "counselling" terrorist activities, makes sense to anyone within a legal context. "Promoting" is vague; "counselling" is clear. "Terrorism in general" is vague; "terrorism" is clear.

Counselling terrorism is a clearly understood and defined offence and therefore useful for security and protecting public safety. The way it was phrased in Bill C-51 was thought-chill over who knows what, but it was essentially draconian.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her remarks, which are always well contextualized.

We are talking about a fundament law that seeks to ensure the safety of all Canadians and protect their individual freedoms. Does my colleague not find it a bit odd that a time allocation motion has been moved on such a fundamental law?

We do not always share the same opinions and we sometimes vote differently, but does my colleague not find it odd that, rather than coming up with the best possible bill, the Liberals are putting us in a situation where we will have to vote on the least bad option?

• (1955)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague.

I will always oppose time allocation motions. They are undemocratic and demonstrate a lack of respect for MPs. Unfortunately, in June 2018, closure has been imposed many times and the debates are too short.

Nevertheless, Bill C-59 constitutes a significant improvement when it comes to protecting Canadians' rights and ensuring their safety.

[*English*]

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure when the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has the opportunity to partake in debate, particularly when it is one as important as this.

Over the course of the debate and in the consultations ahead of time, much attention has been given to the specific wording used in the legislation, but I would like to shift gears and consider the social context in which an important piece of legislation like this exists, as compared to Bill C-51.

My wife was working for a civil liberties organization at the time Bill C-51 was coming through the last Parliament, and one of the things that greatly disturbed me was that there were members of the Muslim community she had worked with who expressed that because of the measures included in Bill C-51, and the general tenor of the government at the time and the anti-Muslim bent it had, there were people who previously came to some of their public education seminars who refused to keep coming, because they feared that the government would be watching them.

These are the very people we should be engaging with to ensure that they are bringing positive messages about the good relationship the government can have with minority communities back to their communities to foster a healthy relationship.

I am curious if the hon. member has any commentary on the importance of public education and outreach to minority communities when we are dealing with legislation that could impact rights, particularly when racial profiling is so important in this case.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I remember well the climate of fear that Bill C-51 created. I remember meeting with young, Canadian-born Islamic women who told me that for the first time in their whole lives, they felt afraid and did not feel welcome. That climate has been largely pushed back, and I give credit to everyone in this place, but it is on all sides and all parties to push back on Islamophobia.

Getting back to part 3 of Bill C-51, it is important that we not try to limit, in any way, the ability of, for instance, a local imam to reach out to people in that community and tell them, "Do not listen to so-and-so. That is a misunderstanding of Quran. This is the real Quran, which is one that has nothing to do with violence." That is an important feature that Bill C-59 helps protect.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my speech this evening by talking about public safety and national security matters.

Whenever I stand up in this place, on whatever we are talking about, I always like to think about whether this is the job of the federal government. Typically, in broad sweeps, I can rarely get past the end of one hand when it comes to things the federal government should be dealing with. I usually think of things like border security, the justice system, and the military as things that definitely the federal government should be taking care of.

The issue we are dealing with tonight is one of those issues the federal government definitely needs to take care of. It is definitely something that is timely. Folks from where I come from, in Peace River—Westlock, in northern Alberta, often mention this to me when I am driving around meeting with folks. They are concerned about national security. They are concerned about terrorism issues. It is one of the top 10 things people talk to me about. Therefore, I think this is a timely debate.

I would hearken back to some of the speeches we heard earlier this evening. September 11 was a significant turning point in western civilization. I think every one of us in this place remembers that day. I remember listening to the news on 630 CHED in Alberta. My alarm clock had gone off, and I was listening to the news, when the normal broadcast was interrupted to tell us that the twin towers had been run into by an airplane. I remember that day well, as I am sure everyone in this place does. Since that day, the entire western world has had to look at how we defend our national security. Before that point, we were looking at our national security from the perspective of nation states. However, this brought a whole new protocol. We needed new laws. Frankly, I think we are still learning all of that.

I do not think the Liberals have necessarily taken serious consideration of public safety and national security in this bill. They basically looked at what we did when we were in government. They thought that the Conservatives were aggressive on this and took the bull by the horns, and they would just turn it back a notch. It does not seem to me that they are giving it adequate weight by saying that they just have to change a bunch of things in Bill C-51. The Liberals heard over and over again that Bill C-51 was bad, and they would just turn it back. That does not seem to me to be grappling with the issues we need to deal with.

Public safety and national security is hard work. We need to create a culture in Canada so that people feel safe. That is what I hear over and over again in my riding. They do not feel that the government is creating a culture in Canada where people feel safe. For example, advocating or promoting terrorism is something that has been touched on in this debate. We need to talk about that in terms of what it means when it comes to Bill C-75, which is another bill that will be debated tonight. I believe that in that particular bill, advocating or promoting terrorism, even if one is found guilty of it, would be downgraded as well.

When we look at the bill before us, I am disappointed that the Liberals have not grabbed the bull by the horns. Bill C-51 came out a number of years back, and the landscape has changed since then. I was looking forward to having a robust debate on this issue. I know that it was something in the Liberal campaign and something I was challenged on over and over again. I knew that after the election, Bill C-51 would be up for debate, and I was looking forward to having that debate on some substantive changes that could improve it.

● *(2000)*

I think we got it right with Bill C-51, but every piece of legislation is open to improvement and I was happy to come here to debate this. I do not think Bill C-59 improves on Bill C-51 at all. In fact, all it seems to do is to just turn everything back a few notches, which does not seem to make an effect. It is the exact same philosophy that we are seeing with Bill C-75. The Liberals say we have backlogs in the justice system, rather than their addressing some of the underlying causes and doing the hard work of digging into it. They say, turn the dial back a little, lower the thresholds, push people out of the system more easily rather than dealing with the actual justice system.

When I do surveys in my riding, people do not think the Liberals are taking our national security seriously. People do not think they are securing our borders properly. All of this plays into the world view of the Liberals.

Whenever I am discussing national security or justice issues, I say that people have the ability to do evil. That is a fact of life and we need to have a justice system that recognizes that. Most people lock their doors at night. Why? Because people are capable of evil. That is the truth. It would be great if we all could leave our doors open and nothing ever went missing. It would be great if we could all give up our firearms and everyone would be safe, but that is not the reality. That is the underlying philosophy that is lacking on the Liberal side. They are not convinced that people are capable of evil and they think that the justice system is being mean to people and that if we just hug the thug, so to speak, everything would be better.

There is a philosophy in this bill that if we just turn down the justice element, if we trusted people a little more, this country would be a safer place. That is definitely not the case. We need to ensure that our police officers and our intelligence community have the resources and tools they need to ensure that Canada is a safe place.

My riding is a long way from the border, and I cannot say that the border crossing issue has directly affected my riding, but it is amazing how many times people in my riding have asked, when is the government is going to do something about the border crossings? Why are the Liberals jeopardizing our public safety? We are seeing that here, as well with the terrorism issue.

One of the things people in my riding are concerned about is the growing threat of terrorism in the world. In this regard, in the bill we see that for advocating and promoting terrorism, the threshold is being lowered, and that in Bill C-75 the sentencing is being lowered. It is being taken from an indictable offence to a summary offence. The Liberals need to do the hard work that it takes to make sure that we have a national security regime that people in Canada trust. That is an important point that I wanted to make here tonight. Whatever the Liberals are doing, people need to have trust in that system that their safety is being upheld, that Canada will remain the safe place it has been in years past, and that people can sleep safely in their beds.

With that, I look forward to any questions that people may have.

• (2005)

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, several times the member said that Bill C-59 was not an improvement over Bill C-51. Fortunately, the experts do not agree with him. University of Ottawa expert, Craig Forcese, said that this is "the biggest reform in this area since 1984, and the creation of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS)." He believes we have needed this for a while.

University of Toronto expert, Wesley Wark, said: "If Canada can make this new system work, it will return the country to the forefront of democracies determined to hold their security and intelligence systems to account".

Could the hon. member comment on the experts' opinions?

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that the member never listened to anything I had to say. The point I was trying to make was that the folks back home in my riding are concerned about public safety, and that this concern is on a continued upward trend. Therefore, what a university professor has to say here in Ottawa is not as important to me as what the people back home have to say. They say that terrorism and the threat of terrorism is a growing concern for them back home, and the government ought to be doing the hard work of understanding that and putting in place changes to our public security regime that would improve people's confidence in its ability to keep them safe.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 8:09 p.m., pursuant to order made on Wednesday, June 6, 2018, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage and second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

• (2010)

[*Translation*]

The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 2.

[*English*]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made Tuesday, May 29, the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, June 11, 2018, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS
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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, June 7, 2018
(Part B)

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 7, 2018

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Continuation of proceedings from Part A*]

* * *

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from June 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C-75, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee, of the amendment, and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the constituents of Kitchener—Conestoga to participate in the debate on Bill C-75, the omnibus Liberal justice bill.

This bill is over 300 pages long and amends several different acts. One does not have to look too far into the past to recollect some of the comments made by members of the Liberal Party in regard to omnibus legislation. I am sure that many of us in this House remember the promises made during the all-candidates debate in the 2015 election not to have more omnibus bills, and many others as well. I will refer to those a little bit later tonight in my comments. However, it seems as if the Liberals have kept their reputation and have changed their minds to suit their own interests. It is a reputation they have developed quite well.

Not only is it a very lengthy bill, but its timing is also suspect, given that on the eve of the Easter long weekend, the Liberal government tabled this piece of legislation that would drastically change our criminal justice system and how criminals and victims are treated. We see again in this bill that the needs of victims are discounted and the lighter treatment of criminals is a priority of the Liberal government.

Tabling Bill C-75 on the eve of the Easter weekend, just prior to the two-week parliamentary break, clearly shows that the government knew it would not go over too well with Canadians or members of the legal community. That, in fact, is definitely what has happened since the tabling of this bill, in spite of the best efforts of the Liberal Party to hide these facts from Canadians.

Another interesting fact about this piece of legislation is that it re-tables three bills already on the Order Paper: Bill C-28, Bill C-38, and Bill C-39 have all been rolled into this new bill, Bill C-75. If anything speaks to the government's inability to handle a legislative agenda, this is surely it. The government has proven to be so badly organized that it is now just combining several previously tabled pieces of legislation in order to make broader changes to our criminal justice system in less time with less scrutiny, and less debate. It is a real shame, especially, as I said earlier, when during the 2015 campaign they promised to allow all members of Parliament to have a voice, and that the government would not use omnibus bills. They also promised that that election would be the last first-past-the-post election, and that they would run small deficits and not use time allocation. All of those promises are out the window with no respect shown for Parliament.

A primary stated objective of Bill C-75 is to reduce delays in our justice system. The R. v. Jordan ruling, which imposes strict time limits on criminals, has made this objective very important. It is a crucial issue that needs to be addressed.

Thousands of criminal trials across Canada have been stayed, including those involving murderers who have been charged. The reason these charges have been stayed is that the time limits imposed by R. versus Jordan were exceeded.

However, we know that this legislation does not achieve the objective. Do not take my word for it. A number of members of the legal community and journalists have also written about this. For example, an opinion piece in the *Toronto Star* stated:

> On Thursday, the federal government released Bill C-75, an omnibus bill aimed at reducing court delays. Unfortunately, good intentions stop at the preamble, especially for those of us who believed in the government's pre-election promise to bring a principled approach to criminal justice reform.

The author goes on to state:

> However, C-75 reclassifies a myriad of offences, giving the Crown discretion to prosecute them summarily. To further incentivize this option, the bill increases the maximum penalty for summary offences from six months to two years. Summary offence trials, like preliminary inquiries, occur in provincial courts, which are already the most congested courts in our system. C-75 may very well take many preliminary inquiries off the provincial court docket, but it will replace them with many more trials.

What has proposed here are more backlogs, more delays, longer time limits. This justice minister is abdicating her responsibility to ensure that there is a functional justice system in Canada.

● (2015)

We see this inability to ensure a functional justice system with this current legislation, as well as with this Liberal government's extremely poor record of appointing judges.

I have one more comment from a legal expert from McElroy Law, a firm located right in Ottawa. She notes, "Under Stephen Harper, the Conservatives justice policies drew a clear line in the sand between criminals and victims. It was an easy sell to promise law-abiding citizens that those convicted of criminal offences will be punished harshly, in order to keep the good guys safe."

She goes on later to say:

> ...the government is tinkering with the guts of criminal trials themselves, such as seeking to have police provide evidence by way of affidavit and having an accused person apply to be able to cross-examine them. The changes, if the bill is passed, will not aid in reducing delay, but will instead undermine trial fairness and may adversely affect Indigenous and other marginalized communities that are so often over-represented in our justice system.

Taken from the Ottawa citizen is the following:

> Bill C-75 promises to speed up court cases by eliminating preliminary hearings for all but the most serious matters. Also, quietly slipped into the bill is a provision that would allow Crown prosecutors to simply file written copies of police officers' evidence instead of actually calling them at trial to testify. Not only will these changes waste more court time than they save, they will erode fundamental safeguards of trial fairness.

The number one responsibility of a government is to keep its citizens safe, and this bill is seriously failing in that responsibility. It seems the government, despite all of its comments about "rigid ideology", is clearly implementing its own rigid ideology without proper consultation with experts and lawyers in the field who are actually going to be dealing with the ramifications of this poor legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I have just been informed that I am sharing my time with the hon. member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner. I thought I had 20 minutes, but I guess I will have to move quickly.

I have not yet addressed the aspects of the bill that my colleagues and I consider to be the most egregious. I am going to move to those now, as I see my time is elapsing quickly.

Some of the offences that would see penalty decreases include, but are not limited to, leaving Canada to participate in a terrorist group or participation in the activity of a terrorist group. The bill proposes to actually reduce the penalties for these crimes, and it is important that Canadians understand that.

There is a long list of criminal offences that the government appears to think are not worthy of indictable charges: leaving Canada to participate in the activity of a terrorist group; punishment of rioter and concealment of identity; breach of trust by a public officer; municipal corruption; influencing or negotiating appointments or dealing in offices; prison breach; infanticide; concealing the body of a child; neglect to obtain assistance in child birth that results in the permanent injury or death of the child; assisting a prisoner of war to escape; obstructing or violence to, or arrest of, an officiating clergyman; keeping a common bawdy house; causing bodily harm by criminal negligence; and impaired driving causing bodily harm. The bill proposes to reduce the sentences for all of these offences.

One of the hybrid offences that the bill adds to the sequence is the obstruction of, or violence toward, an officiating clergyman. This is in section 176. This is the same section that the government proposed to repeal in Bill C-51, the justice omnibus bill. However, eventually it caved in to public uproar and feedback that was carried by our opposition members. Clearly, the government is not listening to the thousands of Canadians who are very concerned by the softening of punishment for this crime. The government is trying to diminish the severity of this crime. The issue is of crucial importance, especially now, given there is an increasing concern about sectarian violence in our world.

I could go on and speak for another 10 minutes, but hopefully I will get a chance to finish later.

● (2020)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, one of the parliamentary rights we have as members of Parliament is that we not need to yield to our whips. The member need not yield to his whip. He could continue to speak for 20 minutes. The Speaker recognized the member and there was no need for the member to yield when he had a 20-minute speech, and I am sure all 20 minutes are important. I regret that the power of whips over individual members in this place is so uniformly accepted. The member for Kitchener—Conestoga has graciously and without any particular reason yielded his spot to someone else.

I agree with him about the elimination of preliminary hearings. We may find that will create more delays. That has certainly been an early critique of this bill, that preliminary inquiries can speed up matters by allowing early decision making about whether there is enough evidence and whether a case should proceed to trial.

I wonder if the member wants to expand on whether he thinks the government has gone too far in Bill C-75 by proposing to completely do away with preliminary inquiries.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Speaker, let me first address the issue of sharing my time. One of the things I had hoped with Bill C-75 was that we would have robust debate and that all members of Parliament who wished to speak to this issue could speak to it. I am thrilled to share my time with my colleagues on my side of the House because we need their input. I have no problem with that.

As to the issue my colleague has raised, I quoted from an expert who clearly pointed out that by eliminating preliminary inquiries and simply shunting them off to another level of court would save some time at one level, but it would clog up the courts at another level. It is on that basis that I am opposed to the legislation.

My primary objection to the bill is the overall mentality of the Liberal government, that somehow criminals are more important than victims. We have to get back to recognizing the needs of victims in our justice system and recognize the severe damage that has been done. We need to leave the kinds of effective deterrents in place that will actually deter these crimes from occurring, and if and when they do occur, there is a punishment that fits the crime.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to talk to a few individuals about preliminary hearings and how this legislation would improve the quality of justice quite significantly by getting rid of them.

I wonder if my colleague across the way could be more clear. Is he saying that we should not get rid of preliminary hearings? What is the Conservative position on preliminaries? Should we have them or should we not? It is a positive thing with respect to what the legislation would do.

● (2025)

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government will use every opportunity it can to divert the issues to its advantage.

I indicated clearly during my comments, and I had many more comments, that my primary concern with the bill is the way it would weaken the criminal justice system in favour of criminals. We should be standing up for the victims. We should not be so concerned about offences being too harsh when they result in death or terrorist acts, creating situations that make not only Canadians feel unsafe but citizens of the world as well.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was quite right when he said the legislation was introduced on a Thursday afternoon before the Easter break. That speaks volumes to how little credibility the legislation has with respect to dealing with these changes. The government knew it would be open to criticism. It has shut down debate on the issue so it does not further expose itself to criticism.

Because the Liberals have been so slow at appointing judges, having summary convictions would stop the backlog in the courts. What does the hon. member feel about that?

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my opening comments, this is a 300-page omnibus bill, which the Liberals promised not to use.

I have in my hands a summary from the Library of Parliament that is 45-pages long. It shows criminal offence after criminal offence. One column shows current penalties and then we read the proposed penalties in Bill C-75. This would give every Canadian who took the time to look at it great cause for concern for their safety.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-75, the Liberal government's justice reform bill.

Sadly, I cannot find a lot of good things to report about the bill to the House, to my riding, or to Canadians at large, for that matter. Like a number of the Liberal government's legislative measures, the purpose of the bill, as presented by the Liberal front bench, does not always match what the bill actually proposes to do.

In Bill C-71, the Minister of Public Safety used tragic shootings in the United States, shootings in Canada, and a guns and gangs summit in Ottawa to suggest he was putting forward legislation that would tackle illegal guns, gangs, and violent criminals. The sad reality is that the legislation he has proposed never once mentions gangs or organized crime, and does nothing to deal with illegal weapons and crimes caused by them.

Prior to that, the Minister of Public Safety had introduced Bill C-59, a bill he claimed would strengthen our national security and protect Canadians. Again, the reality was very different, as the bill would move nearly $100 million dollars from active security and intelligence work that protects Canadians to administrative and oversight mechanisms.

Worst of all, the Minister of Public Safety made bold claims about moving the bill to committee before second reading, stating:

> I would inform the House that, in the interests of transparency, we will be referring this bill to committee before second reading, which will allow for a broader scope of discussion and consideration and possible amendment of the bill in the committee when that deliberation begins.

When it came time to actually consider reasonable, bold, or even small amendments, the Liberals fought tooth and nail to ensure the bill did not change in scope or scale. The results are poor for Canadians and for those who work in national security, more people looking over shoulders, tougher rules, more paperwork, and few, if any, benefits, as front-line efforts to protect Canadians only become more difficult.

Under Bill C-75, we see the same old story. The justice minister made bold claims that she would be helping address the backlog of cases created when the Supreme Court imposed a maximum time frame for cases. The minister made these claims. The legislation would improve the efficiency of the criminal justice system and reduce court delays. It would strengthen response to domestic violence. It would streamline bail hearings. It would provide more tools to judges. It would improve jury selection. It would free up limited court resources by reclassifying serious offences. It sounds like a great bill. Streamline the courts? Strengthen response to domestic violence? Provide more tools for judges? That all sounds fantastic.

Sadly, the Liberals are not achieving any of these objectives according to the legal community nor according to many knowledgeable leaders in the House. Does it shorten trials and ensure that we deal with the backlog? No. The minister appears to make this claim on the elimination of most preliminary hearings.

Preliminary hearings, according the Canadian legal community, account for just 3% of all court time. With an overloaded court system, eliminating a huge number of these hearings will only make a small impact. That impact, unfortunately, will be offset by potentially worse results.

Preliminary hearings are used and can often weed out the weakest cases, which means that more of the weak cases will go to trial if we eliminate the preliminary hearings. That will increase court times. Moreover, preliminary trials can deal with issues up front and make trials more focused. Instead, many cases will be longer with added procedural and legal arguments.

One member of the legal community called this bill "a solution to a problem that does not exist." That is high praise indeed. However, it is the changes to serious criminal offences that have many Canadians, not just the legal community, concerned.

I think all members of the House could agree, or at least accept, that not all Criminal Code issues need to be treated the same and that threshold for punishment should also not be treated the same. However, Canadians expect that Ottawa will ensure we have safe streets, and that the law benefits all people like the law-abiding and victims, not just slanted in favour of the convicted criminals. The Liberals seem to be more focused on making life harder on the law-abiding and easier on criminals.

Under Bill C-75, the Liberals have provided the option to proceed with a large number of violent offences by way of summary conviction rather than an indictable offence. This means that violent criminals may receive no more than the proposed 12 months in jail or a fine for their crimes, crimes such as a slap on the wrist for things like participation in a terrorist organization, obstructing justice, assault with a weapon, forced marriage, abduction, advocating genocide, participation in a criminal organization, and trafficking, just to name a very few.

● (2030)

There are many more, but it bears looking at a few in particular. These are serious offences. Allowing these criminals back on the streets with little to no deterrence makes even less sense.

Assault with a weapon, as we know, is when someone uses a weapon that is not a firearm, such as a bat, a hammer, or any sort of item, to attack someone else. These are not minor occurrences. They are serious criminal issues that should have the full force and effect of the law. Abduction is another serious offence. It could involve children taken from parents or intimate partner violence, or it could be combined with a number of other offences for kidnapping and forced confinement.

In none of these scenarios are the victims or society better served when those responsible for these types of offences serve only a minimal jail sentence or receive a fine. The principle is that Canadians expect that our government and our courts will be there to ensure that criminals receive punishment for their crimes, and that good, law-abiding Canadians and those who have been victimized by these criminals are treated well and fairly.

However, the average Canadian cannot see how making sentences shorter on criminals would meet this basic test. The fact is that it does not meet that test. What it does is address another problem. It potentially reduces court backlogs with the promise of reduced sentences. Therefore, it solves the minister's problem. That is perhaps the part we should be looking at. The Minister of Justice is not here to solve her own problems; she is here to serve Canadians and fix their problems. As my colleagues have pointed out very clearly, there are other solutions, better solutions, in fact.

The minister has addressed the backlog with judicial appointments. I note that 20 have been made this year. However, that is not nearly enough to deal with the problems, as there are still so many more vacancies all across this land. The former minister of justice said, "in my six years as minister of justice, there was never a shortage of qualified candidates". Therefore, it is not a failure of the judiciary. It is not that there are too many preliminary hearings. It is not that there are way more criminals, as crime rates overall have been declining. The problem resides almost entirely with the minister and the government getting more people on the bench and in the prosecutorial services.

As I have said in the House before, public safety and national security should be the top priority of the House and should be above politics, so that the safety and security of Canadians are put ahead of political fortunes. While the Liberals have said that public safety is a priority, they have said that everything else is their top priority as well. To have 300 or more top priorities is to have no priorities at all.

Canadians expect that the government will make them its top priority. Sadly, this bill fails the test to keep Canadians safe and deliver effective government. The legal community has said that this bill is deeply flawed and would hurt the legal system rather than help it. Police officers will likely see themselves arresting the same people over and over again as criminals get lighter sentences or fines on summary convictions. Therefore, the backlog will move from the courts to the policing community and back to the courts. How does that help the average Canadian?

In closing, I am of the opinion that Canada is going to be weaker after the Liberals leave office in 2019, and far weaker than when they entered office. Their wedge politics on the values test, pandering to terrorists, ignoring threats from China, targeting law-abiding gun owners, lack of leadership on illegal border crossers, and waffling on resource development continue to put Canadians at a serious disadvantage that weakens our public safety and national security and places undue strain on families and communities.

● (2035)

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for his service to his community. He said something that I think was quite compelling, about there being no greater responsibility for this Parliament than the safety of Canadians. I could not agree with him more.

In April 2016, the member rose in the House and voted for mandatory alcohol screenings, just as an example. The evidence is overwhelming on that particular measure, mandatory authority for the police to stop drivers and administer a roadside alcohol screening test. The member voted for that in April 2016, yet he rose again in the House less than a year later and voted against it. Given his stated commitment, which I believe is quite sincere, that we have no greater responsibility than the safety of our citizens, and in light of the overwhelming evidence that mandatory alcohol screening saves lives, could he explain the contradiction?

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's service to his community over the years, and I have great respect for him in that regard.

I would like to clarify for my friend that in April 2016, I was contemplating becoming a candidate for the Conservative Party of Canada. I had retired some three and a half months previous to that and was enjoying my retirement after 35 years of service, so I did not vote against and for and contradict myself. I was not here to do so. I just wanted to correct the record on that.

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud of Bill C-75. With this piece of legislation, our government is fulfilling its promise to move forward with comprehensive justice reforms. It would have real effect on court delays and reduce the overrepresentation of indigenous people, people of colour, in particular black people, and other marginalized groups in the criminal justice system, including those with mental health and addiction issues.

We are making good on our promise and commitment to address intimate partner violence. Do the member's constituents not agree that we should increase the sentencing for perpetrators of intimate partner violence?

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, I am troubled to see that Bill C-75, where it addresses some of the concerns the member raised, specifically when dealing with the disproportionate population of indigenous people in our justice system, does not necessarily deal with that in the way the committee has been studying it. It would not necessarily eliminate the risk of intimate partner violence in our communities, as we would like.

As for the member's question, when I speak to members of my community, the first thing they mention is not what is being promised, but the concerns they have about criminals being dealt with in a manner they do not think is appropriate for some of the serious offences. My friend across the way who asked the first question will understand this. In my community, there are a significant number of individuals who have been criminals previously in their life, and they are still friends of mine. When I speak with them, they consider our justice system to have been incredibly light on them when they were in the criminal justice system. Unfortunately, those who continue to perpetuate crimes think that our justice system is sometimes a laughing stock, and it should not be.

● (2040)

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time this evening with my friend from West Nova.

I also want to take the opportunity to apologize to my friend from Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner for failing to remember that he had not yet joined the House, and I appreciate very much his remarks.

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to join today's second reading debate and speak to the bail and administration of justice offence reforms contained in Bill C-75 to address delays in the criminal justice system.

I am proud to speak to what will be the largest reform to the bail system in 35 years. I believe the changes proposed in Bill C-75 will go a long way toward encouraging a cultural shift in how the pretrial release and detention decisions in our justice system are approached by police officers and the courts, and strike the right balance in reducing unnecessary detention and bail conditions, while maintaining a strict focus on public safety.

According to police and court statistics, over half of the people currently in provincial and territorial detention facilities have not yet had a trial or been found guilty of any offence. We also know that indigenous people and other marginalized groups are overrepresented within that group of people who are being incarcerated before their trial.

During my career in law enforcement, I have witnessed, on far too many occasions, court time and resources being disproportionately allocated to address breaches of police conditions or court conditions for those on bail. Some of these conditions are simply unnecessary, as they are not related to the underlying offence. They are not necessarily related to maintaining public safety. This ineffective approach can perpetuate individual cycles of incarceration and divert critical resources from other cases, including those involving the most serious offences.

The proposed changes in Bill C-75 related to the bail regime would modernize and streamline bail provisions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our bail process. The current bail system has developed over a very long period of time and has become somewhat of a labyrinth of provisions for police and courts to navigate. These complex provisions are being used daily in police stations and courts across Canada.

I am very pleased to see that the bill seeks to reduce the imposition of bail conditions that are unreasonable, irrelevant, and unnecessary, by codifying what is known as the principle of restraint. This change is consistent with the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in R. v. Antic in 2017. The principle of restraint's starting point is that accused persons will be released at the earliest reasonable opportunity on the least onerous conditions appropriate in the circumstances. Clearly laying out the principle of restraint in the Criminal Code would provide a good starting point for providing safeguards for individuals who tend to be most disadvantaged by the criminal justice system. These include indigenous people and marginalized groups that are overrepresented in the criminal justice system, including those who live in poverty, suffer from mental health issues, or are homeless.

The principle of restraint would reduce the likelihood that bail conditions would have the effect of unnecessarily criminalizing predictable patterns of behaviour that do not put the public at risk or relate to the underlying offence for which the offender is before the court. For example, placing a condition that a person struggling with alcohol abuse not consume alcohol, even when alcohol was not involved in the predicating offence, creates a set of circumstances that must inevitably lead to the re-incarceration of that individual. These new provisions in the Criminal Code would also require police and courts to consider the specific circumstances of indigenous accused and accused people from marginalized populations at the bail stage.

These types of considerations are often referred to as Gladue considerations. They have been interpreted by the courts in the sentencing context as requiring that the method used in coming to a decision take into account the unique systemic background factors of indigenous people or other marginalized groups, which may have played a part in bringing the particular indigenous person or vulnerable person before the court in the first place.

I would like to assure members that there is nothing in this principle that waters down the requirement for police officers and courts to detain an accused who is likely to endanger public safety. Those who pose a risk to the public will still be detained after Bill C-75 comes into force.

There are also a number of proposed bail amendments in Bill C-75 that focus on maintaining public safety and specifically protecting victims of intimate partner violence. Based on the changes contained in the bill, when an accused is charged with an offence involving violence against an intimate partner, and when the accused has been previously convicted of an offence involving violence against an intimate partner, a reverse onus would apply in determining bail. A reverse onus means that instead of the crown being required to show the court why the accused needs to be detained, the onus will shift to the accused, who will need to prove to the court that he or she should be released. These amendments target serious conduct and will meet our government's platform commitment to better protect victims of intimate partner violence.

● (2045)

Another proposed bail amendment would require the courts to consider the previous criminal convictions of the accused. We believe this captures the intent of the former Senate public bill, Bill C-217, which was in response to the 2015 murder of RCMP Constable David Wynn, without some of the unintentional operational consequences that we felt could result from Bill S-217, including additional delays.

With the time I have left, I would like to speak to the amendments that would provide an alternate approach in responding to administration of justice offences.

Under the current law, when police officers respond to an alleged breach of a bail condition or a failure to appear in court, they currently have two options: they can do nothing, or they can lay a criminal charge. Bill C-75 would create a third option. Both the police and crown attorneys would have the discretion to refer the accused to a judicial referral hearing as an alternative to laying new charges for the breach or failure to comply with conditions of release. This tool would still hold the accused accountable but would be far more efficient than laying new charges for the breach, and it would allow an opportunity to modify and update conditions, as required by the circumstances.

I cannot emphasize enough that the judicial referral hearings would only be available when the conduct had not caused physical, emotional, or economic harm or property damage to a victim. At these hearings, the judge or justice would consider the current conditions of release in light of the alleged breach or failure and could take one of the following actions: they could take no action and have the accused released on exactly the same conditions under which they were previously released; they could release the accused after varying their bail conditions; or they could order that the accused be detained in custody, including for identification purposes.

This reform, in combination with the bail reforms I have previously spoken of, aims to reduce delays in the criminal justice system by reducing the number of conditions that would be breached in the first place and by reducing the number of unreasonable and unnecessary conditions that may be imposed. This reform would provide more efficient ways of responding to minor breaches of conditions and would reduce the number of administration of justice charges that currently clog our criminal justice system.

Since courts would also be required to consider the circumstances of indigenous accused and accused from vulnerable populations in these judicial referral hearings, this new tool would assist in reducing the overrepresentation of these groups within our criminal justice system.

These proposed changes to the bail system and the new tool to address administration of justice offences are long overdue and will go a long way to improving Canada's criminal justice system. They will help direct attention to important considerations related to public safety rather than using the system as a means of warehousing those members of society who are already unfairly disadvantaged by our society in so many other ways.

For these reasons, I urge all members to support this bill, send it to committee for study, and give us an opportunity to make our criminal justice system more efficient and serve Canadians by keeping our communities safe.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments and also for his service to our country, especially to the city of Toronto.

As I mentioned earlier, the bill is made up of three separate bills that have already been tabled in the House: Bill C-28, Bill C-38, and Bill C-39. One deals with the victim surcharge, one with exploitation and trafficking, and one with unconstitutional provisions, which we support.

During the last campaign, in 2015, we heard over and over from Liberal members that there would be no omnibus bills, there would be no closure, and MPs would be allowed to speak individually and have adequate time for debate.

There are so many promises that have been broken. How can the member and his colleagues stand here tonight and speak to the bill, which is clearly an omnibus bill? We support many parts of it, but because of the fact that the Liberals rolled three bills into one, it made it impossible for us to even accept some of the good things in it without buying into all of these very negative implications, which I outlined earlier.

● (2050)

Mr. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, I am strongly of the opinion that this is not an omnibus bill. Every aspect of this bill concerns the administration of justice. It is intended to improve public safety.

Here we stand together this evening. We are in debate on this very issue, so there is the opportunity for us to speak on it. We are encouraging members to let us move this bill before committee so that we can allow committee members to call witnesses, examine the bill in-depth, and return it to this House after their oversight and with their advice on how we might make the best law to improve public safety and the administration of justice in this country.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would excuse the hon. member for some of the cynicism that can clearly be expected when the bill goes to committee. We have seen literally disasters at other committees where the Liberals, with their majority on committees, ram things through. There is nothing to lead any of us, including all Canadians, to believe that it will not happen with this piece of legislation.

I want to speak to the priorities within the department's plan. The bill would reduce criminal offences to potential summary convictions for assisting a prisoner of war to escape, blood alcohol over the legal limit, polygamy, forced marriage, and marriage under the age of 16, and the list goes on. The bill would reduce these offences, but there is nothing in the department's plan that talks about putting judges in place to reduce the backlog within the criminal justice system. Why is that? Why is that not in the bill?

Mr. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of elements I am hoping to address, and I will try to do so briefly, in the interest of maintaining time for other speakers.

First, I would address the issue of the effectiveness of our committee. I have the privilege of sitting as the parliamentary secretary before the justice committee, and the members of the justice committee, from all parties, are remarkably engaged. We have seen the evidence in some of the work they have done in reports they have presented to the government. It has been exceptionally collegial and co-operative between the parties. Frankly, I reject the suggestion that the important work of our committee is somehow less than successful.

In our justice committee, we had the former attorney general of Canada as an exceptionally wise and contributing member. We are very grateful for his contributions. I would strongly defend the work of our committees, and I look forward to their having the opportunity to review the bill and come back—

The Deputy Speaker: Perhaps the next time.

We have time for one more short question and response in questions and comments.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have a chance to speak to Bill C-75 briefly.

I welcome the introduction of the end of peremptory challenges in jury trials. I am worried about removing the opportunity to cross-examine police officers during preliminary inquiries. I wonder if the member has any comments on that.

Mr. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, it is an issue that has been raised. There is a concern among the defence bar about the efficacy of preliminary hearings. I have actually given testimony at many preliminary hearings in my life, and in many cases, we have found that with the new requirements of disclosure and with other judicial efficiency measures, such as judicial pretrials that are now taking place, the requirement and the efficacy of pretrials have been significantly impacted.

There is ample evidence in our trial procedures for the evidence to be tested properly in court and subject to cross-examination. Recognizing the importance of certain types of trials, we would maintain preliminary hearings for those offences that are considered within our criminal justice system to be the most serious and to have the greatest consequences. They would carry a potential life sentence. We are maintaining preliminary hearings for those very serious cases, but frankly, the system has evolved and we are recognizing that evolution.

● (2055)

Mr. Colin Fraser (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the debate on this important bill, Bill C-75. I will be spending my time discussing those aspects of the bill that were previously introduced in Bill C-39. These changes seek to make our criminal law clearer and more accessible, revising or repealing certain Criminal Code provisions that have been found unconstitutional and thus are no longer enforceable. These are important changes, because they would help to ensure that the law as written would reflect the law as applied. This would promote efficiency in the criminal justice system by eliminating confusion and errors. Some might say that these kinds of changes are unnecessary and that the concerns motivating them are more theoretical than practical. However, this is simply not the case.

The Travis Vader trial serves as a recent and concrete example of the repercussions the continued presence of invalid provisions in the Criminal Code can have. We recall that the case involved the prosecution of Mr. Vader for two counts of first degree murder in respect of Lyle and Marie McCann. In finding Mr. Vader guilty of second degree murder, the trial judge relied upon an unenforceable, previously struck down provision of the Criminal Code. The trial judge's mistaken reliance on an invalid provision was quickly noticed, and shortly thereafter, two convictions of manslaughter were substituted for the second degree murder convictions.

I have the deepest sympathies for Mr. Bret McCann and his family, who have endured the loss of loved ones, the stress of a criminal trial, and the trauma that ensued from the mistaken reliance on dead laws. I want to thank him for his continued advocacy in this area. I also wish to acknowledge my colleague, the member for St. Albert—Edmonton, with whom I serve on the justice committee, who has advocated for the removal of these zombie laws from our Criminal Code and has said that this should be something that crosses all political lines and that he expects will be supported by all sides of this House.

What are these specific changes in Bill C-75? The bill would repeal provisions related to the offence of murder, the abortion offence, the spreading of false news, the loitering part of the vagrancy offence, two evidentiary requirements found in the impaired-driving regime, and a provision that prevented judges from giving enhanced credit for time served in custody prior to sentencing. It also proposes to repeal the prohibition against anal intercourse.

In the time available to me, it will not be possible for me to comprehensively discuss each of these amendments, but I would like to highlight a few of them, starting with the provisions mistakenly relied upon in the Vader trial that I referenced a moment ago.

The Criminal Code defines and classifies murder as either first degree or second degree. In either case, a murder conviction is punishable by a mandatory penalty of life imprisonment and it is accompanied by the highest level of social stigma. In 1990, building on a previous decision from 1987, the Supreme Court of Canada held, in R. v. Martineau, that in order to respect the charter, a murder conviction requires proof beyond a reasonable doubt of subjective foresight of death. In other words, the accused intended to cause death or intended to cause bodily harm knowing that, or being reckless as to whether, death would actually ensue.

The effect of this ruling is twofold. First, it means that the entirety of section 230 is unenforceable, the provision at issue in the Vader trial. Section 230 indicates that culpable homicide is murder where it occurred during the commission of other offences, such as robbery, even in cases where the offender did not intend to kill the victim.

Second, it means that part of subsection 229(c) is of no force and effect. Its says that it is murder when a person, while pursuing another unlawful object, "does anything that he knows or ought to know is likely to cause death, and thereby causes the death" of another person. The phrase "or ought to know" is an objective standard that is determined based on what a reasonable person, standing in the accused's place, would have known and not on what the accused actually knew. Therefore, it could allow a conviction for murder even if the accused did not know that his or her actions were likely to cause death. The phrase "or ought to know" was read out of subsection 229(c) by the Supreme Court of Canada, but its continued presence in the Criminal Code has caused delays, inefficiencies, and injustice to the accused where, for instance, a jury is not clearly informed that it should ignore it when determining an accused person's guilt. This can also lead to a waste of judicial resources where such an omission forms the basis for an appeal.

● (2100)

Bill C-75's proposed amendment would make clear that a conviction for murder cannot rest on anything less than an intent to kill, or an intent to cause bodily harm knowing that, or being reckless as to whether, death would actually ensue. Bill C-75 would also repeal section 159 of the Criminal Code, an unfortunate vestige of a bygone era in which society passed moral judgment on non-harmful consensual sexual preferences through the criminal law, a section of the Criminal Code that has been declared unconstitutional by several appellate courts because it discriminates on the basis of age, marital status, and sexual orientation.

Additional changes will clarify that historical sexual offences can only be used if the conduct at issue would be prohibited by existing sexual offences if committed today. This approach protects both equality rights and victims of sexual offending, regardless of when the offence occurred. Bill C-75 would also repeal section 181 of the Criminal Code, which prohibits the spreading of false news. This is an extremely old offence, dating back to 13th century in England, and at that time it was targeted at conduct that was meant to sow discord between the population and the king, and is out of place in today's society. In Regina v. Zundel in 1992, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down this offence because it found that it unjustifiably violated freedom of expression, pursuant to paragraph 2(b) of the charter. The court held that the offence lacked a clear and important societal objective that could justify its extremely broad scope.

As we are proposing to repeal this unenforceable offence, some might have questions about whether our criminal laws should target false news in some way. These questions would be understandable, particularly given recent discussions of the spreading of fake news, for example, and concerns about the use of fake news to promote hate against particular groups. In this respect, it is worth noting that the Criminal Code already contains a robust set of hate propaganda offences and other hate crime-related provisions that can be relied upon in appropriate cases.

Bill C-75 would also repeal section 287 of the Criminal Code, the abortion offence, which prohibited the procurement of a miscarriage and was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court almost 30 years ago. It is high time that this invalid provision be removed from our Criminal Code, in part so that women across Canada will not face the additional and unnecessary burden of figuring out what the criminal law currently prohibits at a time when they may be facing one of the most difficult decisions of their lives.

The Supreme Court of Canada's guidance on this point was clear. It stated, "Forcing a woman, by threat of criminal sanction, to carry a foetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations, is a profound interference with a woman's body and thus an infringement of security of the person." I agree, and wish to applaud the Minister of Justice for proposing the removal of this long outdated and unenforceable provision from the Criminal Code.

As I said earlier, these changes and others that I have not been able to discuss in detail tonight are about promoting clarity in the law. All Canadians should be able to turn to the law as written as a reliable and trustworthy indication of the actual state of the law. These changes are consistent with the objectives of other amendments contained in Bill C-75, in that they will make our system more efficient and accessible. These changes are all about respect for the charter, and I urge members of Parliament to support the passage of this bill at second reading so it can go to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, which I am proud to be a member of, so that it can be fully examined, studied, and be given thoughtful consideration.

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, I am extremely proud of this piece of legislation as it moves forward with comprehensive justice reforms. One thing I am particularly proud of is how it would reduce the overrepresentation of indigenous people, people of colour, in particular black people, and other marginalized groups in our criminal justice system.

Could the hon. member elaborate a little more on this particular point, which I am sure my constituents of Brampton West and members of the House would appreciate?

● (2105)

Mr. Colin Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her excellent question and observation that this bill does include provisions that would certainly help reduce the overrepresentation in our criminal justice system of marginalized and racialized communities, which we have to come to terms with in our country.

The very important measures in this bill to deal with bail provisions, which currently have many people in the system being held awaiting trial on administration of justice offences, and which contribute to stigmatization of certain groups in our communities, will go a long way in helping to reduce the overrepresentation in our system.

We also know that in our criminal justice system today, we have Gladue reports that are used in sentencing, which should be taken into account properly to ensure that we reduce the overrepresentation of indigenous people in our prisons in this country.

I thank my hon. friend for her question, and I look forward to studying this while bearing that in mind at the committee.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my friend and colleague for an excellent speech that laid out some of the positive features of Bill C-75.

In response to the last question he was asked, the member raised the issue of the administration of justice offences. Having spent time working in the courts as a lawyer, I cannot tell the House how frustrating it was when we saw cases get delayed, one after the other.

I am curious if the member would like to offer a few comments on how allowing judicial referral hearings, as opposed to a full-blown trial process, when dealing with these minor administration of justice offences, might help reduce that backlog and get more cases through.

Mr. Colin Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I too, from having worked as a lawyer in the system and oftentimes in provincial courts, know that the burden on the court resources dealing with administration of justice offences is overwhelming. In fact, in many instances, at least half of the docket on any given day in provincial court is filled with these offences that could be dealt with in another way that would certainly not put the safety of the public at any risk and would hold the accused accountable, while actually allowing the court resources to be spent properly on the subject matter that brought the accused to court in the first place.

Canadians expect that we will deal with serious offences before the courts in a timely fashion. The measures in this bill to deal with the administration of justice offences will not only properly respond in some way to the Jordan decision, which we are all coming to terms with in the criminal justice system, but also make our system fairer for all involved.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech. We spent some time travelling together, and he truly is an honourable gentleman.

I appreciate a lot of what he is saying today, especially the sentiment behind reducing the number of marginalized and racialized people in our court system. However, there is nothing in the departmental plan, not one single measurable goal, going back four years, actually showing any tangible result or goal of reducing what has happened in the past.

Can the member square the conflict between saying that we want to address this issue while at the same time the departmental goal signed off on by the Minister of Justice does not show a single metric improving over the next several years?

Mr. Colin Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and certainly appreciate his comments. There are many measures in this bill that deal with efficiencies in the system and that would ensure that people are treated fairly, whether the accused or victims of crime, in the criminal justice system.

I appreciate what he is saying with regard to dealing with racialized minorities or people who may be overrepresented in our criminal justice system. This bill does several of those things. Just in the short time I have, I can say that this government has restored the court challenges program, which will certainly allow people access to the courts. We have also increased funding for legal aid that will allow these people to get proper representation in our courts.

● (2110)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Whitby. I am pleased to rise to speak to the measures that will be beneficial to victims of crime included in Bill C-75, an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other acts and to make consequential amendments to other acts. The aim of the bill is to modernize the criminal justice system and reduce court delays.

As part of the criminal justice review, a round table for victims and survivors of crime was held in Ottawa in June 2017. During that event, a number of victims and survivors of crime expressed their concerns about the delays in the criminal justice system. These individuals emphasized that court delays and postponements have considerable negative repercussions on them and their families because of the continued stress and anxiety they feel in relation to the crime and the testimony.

Court delays can also negatively impact victims' mental health at a time when they are trying to put the experience of being victimized behind them. If victims have health problems or are quite elderly, long delays can also interfere with their ability to testify.

Every time there is a delay or an adjournment, victims have to reorganize their schedule, take time off work, or spend more money on help at home to look after children or elderly parents, for example.

During the round table, several victims of crime also said they were very worried about court delays and especially the repercussions of the Supreme Court of Canada ruling in Jordan. Specifically, victims are outraged when delays result in a stay of proceedings and the accused not being held responsible for their actions. For example, let's put ourselves in the shoes of parents whose child was murdered. Imagine the criminal proceedings against the accused being stayed because of delays. No wonder parents lose faith in the administration of justice.

I am therefore very pleased that the government introduced Bill C-75 in response to these concerns. In general, this bill sets out measures that will make the criminal justice system more efficient and will have positive outcomes for the victims. Bill C-75 also includes several specific measures to address the concerns of victims and survivors of crimes. In particular, it would make changes to preliminary inquiries, the reclassification of offences, and intimate partner violence offences.

At present, a preliminary inquiry is held if a person is charged with an indictable offence, chooses to be tried by the Superior Court, and asks for such an inquiry. This procedural step determines if there is enough evidence to send the accused to trial. Over time, the preliminary inquiry has evolved and become, among other things, a means for the accused to be provided with all the evidence against him or her. However, with the constitutional requirement to disclose evidence to the defence, preliminary inquiries are becoming less and less prevalent.

During the preliminary inquiry, the crown and the defence have the opportunity to examine and cross-examine witnesses and to assess their credibility. Although the cross-examination is an essential element that guarantees the right of the accused to a fair trial, having to testify first at the preliminary inquiry and then at the trial, sometimes several years after the offence was committed, can be particularly difficult for the victims.

The reforms proposed by Bill C-75 would limit the holding of a preliminary inquiry to offences punishable by life imprisonment, such as murder, committing an indictable offence for the benefit of a criminal organization or terrorist group, and kidnapping.

● (2115)

The other amendments would also strengthen the powers of the justice presiding at the preliminary inquiry to limit the issues explored and the number of witnesses. The proposed changes to preliminary inquiries would significantly reduce the number of offences for which victims are called to testify multiple times.

This will reduce the impact on vulnerable persons, such as victims of sexual assault, who are often re-victimized during cross-examination. What is more, the changes will shorten the judicial process, which will help reduce the prolonged period of stress and anxiety for victims.

Bill C-75 will improve Criminal Code provisions in order to make victims of intimate partner violence safer. A definition of "intimate partner" for the purposes of the Criminal Code will be created and will specify that it includes former and current spouses, common-law partners, and dating partners.

If the accused has already been found guilty of violence against a domestic partner, the bill would reverse the burden of proof during the inquiry on the interim release for a new offence of violence against a domestic partner. The amendments would also allow police officers to impose a wider range of conditions on the accused in order to protect the victims.

The courts will have to consider the fact that an accused was charged with an offence of violence against a domestic partner in determining whether the accused should be released or should be kept in detention. Furthermore, the proposed amendments would specify that choking, suffocating, or strangling constitute aggravated assault, in order to address concerns that the criminal justice system has a tendency to underestimate the seriousness of these actions.

Finally, Bill C-75 would allow a higher maximum penalty for a repeat offender found guilty of an offence involving intimate partner violence.

As the Supreme Court stated in Jordan, delays exacerbate the suffering of victims and prevent them from turning the page. The reforms proposed by Bill C-75 would transform the criminal justice system, making it more efficient, effective, equitable, and accessible while protecting public safety.

The different measures that I spoke about today will be beneficial for victims and survivors of crime because they will shorten the process and reduce the number of times victims will need to testify, preventing prolonged stress and anxiety.

I invite all my colleagues to support this important bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we read this bill in its entirety and analyze it properly, we see that it is a very important bill for human rights.

Could my colleague further illustrate how this bill would help with respect to intimate partner violence?

● (2120)

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Mr. Speaker, intimate partner violence and domestic abuse are scourges in our society, and were not taken very seriously until recently.

This bill would strengthen the way our criminal justice system responds to intimate partner violence by enacting a reverse onus at bail for repeat offenders, broadening the definition of intimate partner violence to include dating partners and former partners, and increasing the maximum sentence in cases that involve intimate partner violence.

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend for the incredible work she has done as a lawyer, and now as a member of Parliament.

We know that this piece of legislation will have a real effect on court delays, as it intends to bring a culture shift within the criminal justice system, something that the Supreme Court stressed in the Jordan decision is required. Can the member perhaps elaborate a bit on that, and comment on the effect this piece of legislation would have on bail hearings as well?

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Mr. Speaker, when there are delays in justice, the administration of justice is brought into disrepute. Therefore, modernizing and streamlining our bail system within this bill, including the principle of restraint in order to reduce the imposition of unnecessary conditions, would have the intended effect of reducing the overrepresentation of indigenous and marginalized Canadians in our criminal justice system. At this point, the statistics indicate that those who come from the indigenous and black communities are overrepresented in our criminal justice system and jails.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments by my colleague, who I know puts a great deal of effort into the bills and issues she addresses on the floor of the House when representing her constituents. The question I have for her relates to how necessary this legislation is. We understand and appreciate how important it was that the department did a lot of consultations leading up to the introduction of the legislation. It is very important that we do this major overhaul and reform to modernize our justice system, which is long overdue, as she put it. Could the member provide some insight into just how important it is that we see this legislation today?

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Mr. Speaker, I also enjoy listening to my colleague when he speaks in the House. I always say that if this colleague were not in the House, then there would be no House.

This bill is extremely important. It has reviewed the last 10 years of changes made to our criminal justice system. We are going to be dealing with preliminary hearings and bail hearings more efficiently. Intimate partner violence will be taken very seriously. Repeat offenders will be brought to task with this bill.

For the last two years, there were many round tables that took place with our minister and our parliamentary secretary. It was very important to listen to the stakeholders. We listened to everyone from victims' rights advocates, to defence lawyers, to our provincial and territorial counterparts as well, and we got the big picture. Now this bill will make our justice system efficient.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am going to start my speech by giving a few statistics. Indigenous people make up 4% of the Canadian population, yet make up 28% of the admissions to federal correctional facilities. Black Canadians represent 3% of the general population and account for almost 10% of the prison population. There has been a 70% increase in black Canadians in federal prisons over the last 10 years. Additionally, according to Statistics Canada's 2012 Canadian community health survey, persons with mental health disorders are about four times more likely to report being arrested than Canadians who do not suffer with mental health issues.

While these statistics are shocking, we need to keep them in mind.

To say that we need to reform the criminal justice system is an understatement. That is why I am pleased to contribute to today's debate on Bill C-75, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Youth Criminal Justice Act, which proposes substantial reforms to our criminal justice system.

Today I would like to focus my remarks on a particularly challenging issue that I addressed at the outset, and that is the overrepresentation of indigenous people and marginalized groups within our criminal justice system.

Indigenous people are over represented, both as victims of crime and offenders in the criminal justice system. The rate of victimization is twice as high for indigenous people compared to non-indigenous people. Additionally, indigenous people, people of colour, people from marginalized groups, such as those who suffer from mental health or addiction issues, are also overrepresented in the incarcerated population. The data in this regard paint a bleak picture.

The following statistics have been mentioned in this place before, but they warrant repeating to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the magnitude of this problem. The figures I mentioned at the start of my comments have been increasing over the past few years and it is forecast that by 2025, one-third of the population in provincial and territorial custody will be indigenous.

The overrepresentation statistics are even more concerning when we think about indigenous women and we talk about intersectionality. In 2016, this group accounted for 38% of female admissions in provincial and territorial custody.

Indigenous youth are also overrepresented in our criminal justice system, being five times more likely to be involved in the correctional system than non-indigenous youth.

This overrepresentation of certain groups is a systemic issue that begins with the police or courts long before incarceration, and is a result of a failure of various support systems. The criminal justice system has been left to operate as an inadequate fall-back solution.

Bill C-75 proposes a series of measures that will help address the problem of overrepresentation of indigenous persons and persons from marginalized groups within our criminal justice system, particularly through amendments to the bail regime and improved responses to administration of justice offences.

Indigenous people and people of marginalized groups are disproportionately impacted by the existing bail process. The groups are disproportionately represented in the group of accused persons being detained before trial, often because of their inability to obtain a surety, which is essentially like having a co-signer on a loan, or inability to provide a residential address.

When released, these populations are also disproportionately impacted by bail conditions, such as a curfew or alcohol consumption restrictions. Many of these bail conditions are not necessary to ensure attendance in court or to ensure the safety of the public. Indigenous people and people from marginalized groups are therefore more likely to commit administration of justice offences by breaching these stringent conditions. This cycle of injustice leads to individuals being caught in the revolving door of the criminal justice system.

Right now in Canada, as in many countries, accused people are routinely remanded in custody unnecessarily or are burdened with impractical bail conditions that are unrelated to public safety. This is one of the primary ways that indigenous and marginalized offenders are caught in the web of the criminal justice system.

Bill C-75 directs police and judges to use the principle of restraint when it comes to making decisions on interim release and bail. When a condition is breached, judges are invited to look more closely at the reason for that breach and possible ways to resolve the situation absent of laying a charge. Judges must also give particular attention to the circumstances of indigenous accused and those from other vulnerable groups, like the black community.

● (2125)

Our government is doing this because we know that accused who do not have access to the needed supports and services, including housing, health care, and social services, are at higher risk of breaching bail conditions. These breaches can result in bail being revoked and needless incarceration while awaiting trial.

The principle of restraint proposed in the bill will also require that police and courts impose the least onerous conditions that are appropriate to ensure an accused's attendance in court and to ensure the safety and security of victims and witnesses. The principle of restraint requires that primary consideration be given to the imposition of conditions with which the accused can reasonably comply.

All too often, an inability to comply with onerous and unfair conditions causes a downward spiral of repeated contact with the criminal justice system. This self-perpetuating cycle is difficult to escape and disproportionately affects indigenous peoples and people from marginalized groups.

The codification of the principle of restraint in Bill C-75 would eliminate, at the outset, the imposition of irrelevant, unreasonable or unnecessary conditions to help to reduce instances where persons needlessly would become further involved with the criminal justice system by committing administration of justice offences, while maintaining public safety. These changes will improve the efficiency of our justice system and will reduce the overrepresentation of people most impacted by this vicious cycle.

Bill C-75 will also require, throughout the bail process and in determining how to address breaches of bail conditions, that police and the judiciary give particular attention to the circumstances of indigenous accused and to the circumstances of accused from a marginalized group that is overrepresented in the criminal justice system and that is disadvantaged in obtaining bail. Again, I draw attention to those in the black community. This includes persons who do not have the financial resources to secure their release, do not have residential addresses, do not know anyone who can act as a surety, or those who suffer from mental health difficulties and are unable to obtain the resources they need to comply with their conditions once released.

Bill C-75 also introduces a new judicial referral hearing to which the principle of restraint and the requirement to give particular attention to the circumstances of indigenous or vulnerable accused would apply. The judicial referral hearing is a new tool for police officers faced with an accused individual who they believe has breached a condition without causing harm to a victim or property damage. Instead of being limited to laying a charge or to doing nothing, police could refer the accused to a judicial referral hearing to have his or her bail conditions reviewed by a judge without laying a new charge.

This new tool would help address overrepresentation in two ways. First, the hearing itself would provide an alternative to laying a charge for breaching bail conditions. Second, the principle of restraint and the requirement to give attention to the circumstances of indigenous or marginalized accused would apply to this hearing.

Finally, Bill C-75 would amend the plea provisions of the Criminal Code, which would have a particularly positive impact on indigenous persons and persons from marginalized groups.

Multiple complex factors can lead to guilty pleas, including an innocent accused being denied bail and wishing to avoid waiting for trials; unreasonable or unnecessary bail conditions; social vulnerabilities, including inadequate housing, addiction and mental health; and factors unique to indigenous culture or marginalized communities, including distrust of the system. These factors often interact and contribute to false guilty pleas from vulnerable individuals.

With these amendments, Bill C-75 takes important steps in addressing the overrepresentation of indigenous peoples and marginalized groups in the criminal justice system. I urge all members to support this very important bill.

● (2130)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague and [illegible] I heard was a terrific amount of concern for people who have committed crimes. I know there have been many cases, and there has been one recently in my riding, where victims simply feel that justice has not been done.

I would like the member to explain how she can talk about some of the sentence reductions that would happen for very serious crimes and how she can face people in her riding who might be victims of these crimes and say that it is more important we deal with compassion for the people who commit the offences than those who are the victims.

● (2135)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes: Mr. Speaker, I want to clear one thing up. First, the proposed amendments will not change the fundamental principles of sentencing, requiring courts to impose sentences that are proportionate to the gravity of the offence and the degree of the responsibility of the offender.

Second, our government takes into account very seriously the safety of Canadians and the safety of our communities. By doing so, we ensure that the victims and those who are impacted by crime are safe and that the perpetrators of those crimes are appropriately dealt with in our criminal justice system.

However, there are individuals who are overrepresented in our criminal justice system and are not a further danger to society or to property. The vulnerabilities and systemic barriers within the system cause individuals like indigenous people, members of the black community, and vulnerable populations, such as those with mental health issues, to be incarcerated and be caught up in a justice system that disproportionately impacts them in a very negative way. We need to be sensitive to that.

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary for Science, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am always interested to hear the comments of my hon. colleague from Whitby about laws and legislation, especially when they affect marginalized groups.

We often hear the opposition, the Conservatives especially, criticize this bill, saying it will mean somehow that criminals will be out on the streets. I know that the people in my community of London West are also concerned. When they hear this, it is fearmongering.

Could my colleague talk about what this really means so people will not be as fearful, as the Conservatives make them feel sometimes?

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes: Mr. Speaker, again, we understand the importance of keeping our communities safe, while upholding the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The protection of Canadians is always paramount in what we do in this place.

However, I want to address my colleague's concern. The suggestion that this bill will have criminals running in the street and that they will not have the appropriate sentencing is a mischaracterization of the proposed amendments. The proposed amendments will not change the fundamental principle of sentencing, requiring courts to impose sentences that are proportionate to the gravity of the offence and the degree of responsibility to the offender. The crown will still have that ability.

The legislation would allow the crown to choose whether to proceed with an indictment or a summary conviction. The severity of an offence is greatly dependent on the circumstances around each case. Uttering threats, assaults, dangerous operation of a motor vehicle, again, the crown will have the opportunity to decide whether the particular offence and the circumstances around that offence requires a much graver sentence.

Again, when we look at the justice system and we go back to the overrepresentation of indigenous and vulnerable groups, it is important to recognize that there are biases and there are systemic barriers within the system that keep those individuals in a perpetual revolving door in that system.

Our government has also taken a comprehensive approach to looking at housing, mental health, and other social determinants of health and well-being that will keep these individuals out of our justice system.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to address the bill. You may have observed that the Conservatives are in a very good mood tonight, but it is not because of the content of the legislation. It is actually other things going on tonight in the province of Ontario.

Some hon. members: What?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Members are asking "what?" They may not know, but it seems there will be a Progressive Conservative majority government in Ontario. I am sorry to have to break that news to my friends across the way, but the Liberals may still get official party status. It is a harbinger of things to come in a year and a half in federal politics. One of the reasons we are likely to see a similar result for the Liberals in a year and a half is precisely their failures with respect to the justice system.

I will turn now to a much less happy subject, and that is the content of the Liberals' Bill C-75. We can call it a justice omnibus or "injustice" omnibus bill. It is over 300 pages, making various changes with respect to the framework around criminal justice. There are certainly problems with the way the Liberals are administering the justice system, problems in need of solutions. However, the proposals by the government do not improve the situation. In fact, they make the situation much worse.

There are so many different aspects of the bill. It pays to mention to some extent that this is an omnibus bill. The Liberals talked in the last election about not doing omnibus bills. They said that omnibus bills limited the scrutiny that could be applied to individual items, that they forced members to vote all at once on provisions, some of which they may think were laudable and others which they may think were not.

Coming from that election promise, we now find ourselves in a situation in this Parliament where it seems virtually all of the legislation we debate is omnibus legislation. It is interesting that we had previous bills before this Parliament that included many of the same provisions and then the government decided it would roll them all together in one massive omnibus bill. I guess the Liberals felt they were not being as effective in advancing their legislative agenda as they wanted to, but this is yet another case where we see the government going back on its promise. On the one hand is the commitment about how it would manage the parliamentary process, then we see, in practice, the government doing the exact opposite.

The arguments the Liberals use for bringing in these omnibus bills, which go against their previous commitments, are usually something to the effect of they think it is a really good bill, that there are a lot of good things in it, so they want to get it through. Whether it is a good bill is precisely what a robust parliamentary process is supposed to determine. That is why the appropriate level of scrutiny is necessary. There will probably be an opportunity to pull all sorts of quotes from the member for Winnipeg North and others decrying these process elements, which are now being deployed with full force under the Liberal government.

We have in front of us an omnibus bill. There are a number of different elements I want to discuss, as well as more broadly the government's failure to manage the justice system effectively.

Members will understand and appreciate how important the effective functioning of our justice system is, especially in a context where the courts have ruled that cases can be thrown out if they do not proceed within a particular time frame. We have seen very serious charges not proceed, simply on the basis of time and delay. Therefore, the management of the criminal justice system so these delays do not happen, so people are actually brought to justice on time, is critical for the protection of society and for ensuring justice is done for victims, for the criminal, and for everyone.

Why do we have this growing problem of delays? The most obvious reason, and a reason the government has been steadfast in refusing to address, is the government's failure to appoint judges.

● (2140)

The fact is, it took six months for the justice minister to appoint a single judge. The government lauds its judicial appointments on various fronts. I am sure that any justice minister would laud their own appointment choice, but we have to get the job done. It is fundamental to the effectiveness of our justice system that we achieve quality and the necessary quantity so that the work can proceed. Appointing justices should be the easy part. I do not suspect that there is any shortage of qualified people in this country who are interested in the position, yet the government has been very slow to proceed, and this has created a significant concern.

It is not as if nobody was suggesting the Liberals take action. Thank goodness we have a strong opposition, and a strong shadow minister and shadow deputy minister of justice who were specifically calling very early on for the government to move forward with the appointment of justices.

I can hear my friend for St. Albert—Edmonton asking the justice minister when she would finally do her job and start appointing judges. The justice minister responded to those questions day after day in question period, yet despite those questions being posed by the Conservatives, we simply did not see action.

We have this issue with court delays, and the government now seems to believe that one of the solutions to court delays is to reduce the penalty to allow for summary convictions. The effect of that is lower sentences for very serious crimes. That is sold by the government as a solution to a problem that it has created, but let us apply Occam's razor and try and take that obviously simpler solution, which is that the justice minister should do her job and appoint the necessary number of judges to ensure that we do not have court delays.

In the context of justifying itself, the government is saying that we are going to have summary convictions to try to fix the problem that we created. The Liberals are not admitting it, but that is the implication of what they are saying. We see proposals for summary convictions, meaning reduced charges for all kinds of various serious crimes. I think it is important for the House to identify and look at some of these crimes for which they are proposing reduced sentences. This is not an exhaustive list, but I want to identify some of the key ones.

There is participation in the activity of a terrorist group. I do not recall ever receiving phone calls in my office from people saying that we should have lighter sentences for those who participate in terrorist groups. Maybe members across the way have had a different experience. However, I do not think, especially in the present time and climate, that people are looking for that kind of approach with regard to those who are involved in a terrorist group.

As well, there is leaving Canada to participate in activities of a terrorist group. There is a possibility now that going to fight abroad with a terrorist organization like Daesh could be a subject of summary conviction and therefore lower sentences. There are other serious offences, but I would highlight those two terrorism-related offences, which are the first ones on my list for which we are hearing proposals in the proposed legislation for lighter sentences.

Concealment of identity while taking part in a riot would be a possible summary conviction, as well as breach of trust by a public officer. The idea of lighter sentences for public officers who breach trust is interesting. Why would the Liberals be proposing lighter sentences for public officers who breach trust? I cannot imagine why the Liberals are proposing lighter sentences for public officers who breach trust. We might pontificate about that, but I would perhaps risk venturing into unparliamentary territory.

● (2145)

There is municipal corruption. For example, if a former MP became the mayor of London, hypothetically, there is a possibility of lighter sentences for municipal corruption.

There is selling or purchasing office. I want to reassure the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities that this does not refer to selling or purchasing office equipment. This is selling or purchasing an office itself, which is a criminal offence. However, now it would possibly be a matter of summary conviction.

Another is influencing or negotiating appointments or dealing in offices. It is interesting that so many elements of political corruption are being proposed for lighter sentences in this bill. It is very interesting, but I cannot imagine why that would be.

For prison breach, there is a proposal for lighter sentences. Assisting a prisoner of war to escape is something that I hope does not happen often. It does not seem to me that this offence would be a good candidate for a lighter sentence, but the justice minister, and through this bill the government, is proposing lighter sentences in that case.

Obstructing or violence to or arrest of officiating clergymen is an item I want to come back to. It is something dealing with section 176 of the Criminal Code that we have already had some discussion on in this place. The government made some commitments with regard to not changing that section, and now it has gone back on those commitments by trying to re-engage that section through Bill C-75. I will come back to that and talk about it in more detail in a few minutes.

There are also lighter sentences proposed for keeping a common bawdy house and for causing bodily harm by criminal negligence.

There are three drunk-driving-related offences: impaired driving causing bodily harm; blood alcohol level over legal limit, with bodily harm; and failure or refusal to provide a sample, with bodily harm. Canadians who are concerned about combatting drunk driving and drug-impaired driving should be, and I think are, a bit frustrated by some of the back-and-forth that we see from the current government. It is frustrating to me as I follow the positions the Liberals take on some things and not on others.

A member of the Conservative caucus proposed a very strong private member's bill that included a number of provisions dealing with drunk driving. That bill was supported by, I think, all members of this House at second reading. Then it was killed after committee, yet many very similar provisions were included in the government's bill, Bill C-46. The government has not been able to pass that bill ahead of its marijuana legislation. The Liberals said it is critical we have these provisions around drunk driving in place, and they proposed it at the same time as Bill C-45, the marijuana legalization bill. They said these things were important together, and they are willing at the same time to pass the marijuana legalization bill ahead of the drunk and drug-impaired driving bill.

Many of the same provisions were already proposed by a Conservative private member's bill. I recall the speech the parliamentary secretary for justice gave at the same time with respect to my colleague's private member's bill, when he quibbled with the bill on such trivial grounds as the coming-into-force date of the bill being too soon. They said they could not pass this bill combatting drunk driving officially because the coming-into-force date was too soon. They can propose an amendment to change that. It was really because the Liberals wanted to try to claim credit for some of the provisions there. Again, we have this further question about the government's response on issues of alcohol-impaired driving because they are creating conditions for a summary conviction around that issue.

Let me list some other offences: receiving a material benefit associated with trafficking; withholding or destroying documents associated with trafficking; abduction of a person under 16; abduction of a person under 14; material benefit from sexual services; forced marriage; polygamy; marriage under age of 16 years; advocating genocide; arson for fraudulent purposes; participating in activities of criminal organizations.

● (2150)

We have a great deal of discussion about the government's feminist agenda, and yet on some of these crimes, such as forced marriage or polygamy, crimes that very often involve an abusive situation targeting young women, the government is reducing sentencing that targets those who commit those kinds of crimes. It is unfortunate to see the government talking about trying to respond to some of these problems that exist, and then when it comes to criminal justice, they think it is acceptable to propose lighter sentences in these cases.

I have a number of other comments I will make about this bill in the time I have left to speak.

There is a proposal in this legislation to get rid of peremptory challenges. This is a provision that we are interested in studying and exploring, but I think that even if there is an inappropriate use of peremptory challenge in some cases, we should be careful not to throw out a provision if there may be other negative consequences that have not been discussed.

Some of the discussion around peremptory challenges suggests, on the one hand, that they can be used to remove people from juries on the basis of racial profiling. Essentially, somebody is racially profiled and presumed to think in a certain way, so they are removed on the basis of a peremptory challenge.

People have countered those criticisms by saying that on the other hand, peremptory challenges could be used against those who express or have expressed or give indication of having extreme or bigoted views. Sometimes the law needs to recognize other potential impacts that are maybe not being fully foreseen.

We think this issue of peremptory challenges is very much worthy of study at the committee level, but I encourage members, in the spirit of appropriate legislative caution, to work out and consider the full consequences of changes to the structure of our jury system, recognizing that even if there may be negative consequences to this provision in particular situations, removing peremptory challenges may create other unconsidered negative consequences as well.

I want to speak about section 176. This is a very important section of the Criminal Code that specifically addresses the targeting of religious officials or the disruption of worship, things that in many cases would likely lead to some charge anyway, though not in every case. It ensures that somebody who is trying to disrupt the practice of faith is treated in an proportionate way. That is what section 176 does.

The government had previously tried to get rid of section 176, to remove it from the Criminal Code. The justification was weak. It said that because the language used was "clergymen", it was somehow narrow in its definition and applied to only one faith and one gender. The point was amply made in response that although the language was somewhat archaic, it was very clear that it applied broadly to any religious official and to any religious institution.

The section was subsequently qualified. There is nothing wrong with clarifying the language, but it was always clear and never seriously in dispute that it applied broadly and on an equal basis.

It was through public pressure, the work of the opposition in partnership with many groups in civil society in raising the alarm about this, that the government backed away at the time from its proposal to remove section 176. Now section 176 is back before us. The government is not proposing to remove it; it is just proposing to change it to a possible summary conviction, again meaning a lighter sentence.

Again we are raising a question that is similar to the discussion around drunk driving. There is this kind of back-and-forth, bait and switch approach with the government, but it is clear that there is this repeated attempt to weaken the laws that protect religious institutions and the practice of faith. Some of the time the government is very glad to trumpet its commitment—for instance, in its talk about combatting Islamophobia—but when we have a concrete provision in the Criminal Code that protects people's ability to practise their faith without interruption, we see not one but multiple attempts by the government to move against it.

● (2155)

There is so much more to say about Bill C-75, which is over 300 pages, that I could talk for hours, but my time has expired.

● (2200)

Mr. Colin Fraser (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I note that my friend across the way mentioned judicial vacancies as one thing that needs to be dealt with. I agree that it is a work in progress. We have seen, though, many appointments made by the justice minister over the last number of months, over the last year, at least. There are more federally appointed judges than in any year previously. We now see appointments to the court that take into account a number of things, such as its inclusive nature, with minorities being represented on the court, more women appointed to the bench, and people with disabilities. Those vacancies are being filled.

I note that there are more federally appointed judges now in Alberta. I know that my friend represents a riding in Alberta. I know there are more federally appointed judges now in Alberta than there were at any time during the previous Conservative government. I wonder if my friend could tell us how many times he complained about the number of judicial vacancies in Alberta when the last government was in office.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, before I address my friend's question, I want to express my condolences over the closure of the Bangor Sawmill Museum in his riding. I know there is a great deal of concern about that. People at the museum have spoken out about how the Canada summer jobs program, the fact that they were being forced to sign an attestation, played a key role in the closure of that museum. I want to express my own concern about that and my hope that the member will be able to work toward getting that museum back open. We said all along that there would be impacts on the program because of the attestation requirement, and I think the member is seeing those impacts, unfortunately, in his own constituency.

To the issue of appointments, the member says it is a work in progress. The government has been in power for two and a half years, yet it took six months to appoint the first judge. I accept the fact, absolutely, that it is desirable to appoint judges from across a full range of backgrounds, experience, and demographic groups. The bottom line is that it has to get done. The necessary number of judges have to be appointed, and I do not think it is fair to anyone to use the pursuit of diversity in appointments as an excuse for being behind on appointments. Frankly, qualified people from a diverse range of backgrounds can be found quickly. It could have been done more quickly than the government did. Unfortunately, it did not do that, and that was a source of delay.

In terms of issues I raised previously with respect to the situation before, the previous Conservative government had a very strong record on judicial appointments. The member is right that I never spoke about the issue in the House before 2015. I wish I had had the opportunity. I was elected for the first time in 2015, so I did not have the chance to do that then, but after 2019, I look forward to engaging another Conservative government on the issue of judicial appointments.

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague's debate, and not one time did he mention anything about racism in our criminal justice system. Indigenous people are overrepresented in correctional facilities. No, it is not a laughing matter. It is very concerning that Conservatives are talking about other things. This is very important. This brings the administration of justice into disrepute.

What does the member have to say about poverty, which is a vicious cycle and contributes to crime over and over? People have mental health issues, and they are being locked away. What does he have to say about these things? Does he not believe that such a bill would be helpful to the most vulnerable in our society?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member that the issues she raised are very serious. Next time I give a speech on a 302-page omnibus justice bill, I will make a point of asking the member which aspects of the bill I should talk about beforehand so I do not make this mistake again. There are so many issues in this omnibus bill, and the member is criticizing my speech by saying that there were aspects of it I did not discuss. I only had 20 minutes. The government should write shorter bills if it wants specific issues addressed in speeches.

I will say that the issue of racism, be it in the justice system or elsewhere, is something I am very concerned about. On Saturday, I will be in Toronto hosting round tables specifically on the issue of discrimination. I do this because it is important for me to hear about those issues and to bring that discussion into Parliament.

I do not think the fight against bigotry should be a partisan issue. It should be an issue on which we all work together, yet that member chose to attack us on the basis that I spoke about other very serious issues in a very long bill. That is quite revealing about whether the government is interested in working collaboratively with other parties on these important issues.

● (2205)

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to revisit the topic of judicial appointments, specifically in Alberta.

I had the absolute privilege of practising law for a number of years in Alberta before I arrived in this place, and I remember that while I was there, I led a session as an instructor for the Legal Education Society of Alberta. I laid out the civil procedure process. When I got to the issue of mandatory judicial dispute resolution, which was a required process under the Alberta rules of civil procedure, I had to instruct the audience that, in fact, it was not technically mandatory, because the chief justice had given an order that because of the shortcomings of the previous government's judicial appointments practices, the courts did not have the roster of judges available to enforce the mandatory provisions of the rules of the court and the rules of civil procedure in Alberta.

I remember that in early 2013, the then minister of justice for the Province of Alberta requested that his federal counterpart, now the hon. member for Niagara, appoint four more superior court judges. I remember reading headlines in the *Calgary Herald* that said that he refused to make this commitment at the time.

In 2017, we had 100 judicial appointments or elevations made by the Minister of Justice, which is the most in at least two decades. Could the member at least acknowledge that the minister is doing her job and is certainly doing her job much better than the previous government when it comes to judicial appointments?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the short answer is no, absolutely not.

It is quite sad that we have a government that, two year and a half years into its mandate, insists, on every file, on trying to assign blame to the previous government.

I think the member overstates the previous situation in certain respects, but if the situation were so dire, why did the justice minister take six months to appoint the first judge? This maybe suggests that the justice minister did not actually think things were as dire as the member is trying to suggest. The fact that she was so delayed in actually getting the job done is quite revealing as well.

The government should not persist in trying to lay all of its failures at the feet of someone else. I think Canadians will see through this. Ultimately, personal responsibility is more of a Conservative value than it is a Liberal value, but at some point, the government will have to take some responsibility for its own failures.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague and friend pointed out many of the shortcomings in Bill C-75. Every member in the House either has a family member or friend or knows a close community member who has been impacted by impaired driving.

I wonder if my colleague could comment on the wisdom, or lack thereof, of reducing the penalty for impaired driving in cases where it causes bodily harm or death. Currently it is an indictable offence, and in Bill C-75, it is indicated as being either indictable or summary. I wonder if my colleague would comment on how it would make the victims of impaired driving and their families feel if we lessened the severity and reduced the deterrent impact of the sentence.

● (2210)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my friend about the importance of having a strong response to impaired driving. We need to be concerned about the rights of victims. Most importantly, we need to minimize the number of victims. In many cases, that is done by sending a strong deterrent effect. We have this strong social pressure in many environments against impaired driving that did not exist in the past. However, the government is moving in the wrong direction by bringing forward these measures that would reduce sentences in these cases. We should be concerned about that and the very serious issue that the Liberals voted against the Conservative private member's bill, which could have done the job on so many things. They decided to put it in a government bill, when we could have already passed my friend's private member's bill. It should already be law.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I represent the riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook on the outskirts of Halifax and Dartmouth. It is a very nice community, with a great fishing industry. There are lots of beaches and lakes, of course. It is a nice community to visit. Last week was Tourism Week. I invite those who did not get a chance to get out to that week to come to my community.

It gives me great pleasure to speak today to Bill C-75 at second reading. This legislation seeks to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act, and other acts that touch on delays in our criminal justice system.

The bill includes much needed amendments and modernizes our criminal justice system to make it more efficient. It proposes changes in six key areas that I would like to address in my speech tonight.

The first changes would modernize and streamline the bail regime. The second would provide an enhanced approach to the administration of justice offences, including for youth. The third would restrict the availability of preliminary inquiries for offences carrying life imprisonment. The fourth would group offences and create more flexibility. The fifth would improve jury composition and the selection of jurors. Finally, the sixth would strengthen the judicial case management measures and processes for making rules for the courts.

These reforms would reduce delays within our criminal justice system and make criminal law and procedure clearer and much more efficient. For example, these reforms would support victims by strengthening responses to intimate partner violence and facilitating remorse appearances.

The issue of delays in the criminal justice system has been the subject of significant and sustained attention in recent years, including calls for action by the Supreme Court of Canada, as well as the provinces, territories, key stakeholders, parliamentarians, and victims.

This legislation is a priority for our government. We need to move forward quickly, and that is why we are debating the legislation tonight. We want to send the bill to committee as soon as possible so that we can hear from witnesses and improve the bill as we move forward with amendments. That is why our government, with Bill C-75, is taking critical steps in co-operation with the provinces, territories, and stakeholders.

The Supreme Court of Canada in the Jordan decision in 2016 established a new framework for determining unreasonable delays. We need to deal with those delays as soon as possible. As well, in the Cody decision in 2017, the court re-emphasized the responsibility of all criminal justice system participants, including judges and defence counsel, to move cases forward as soon as possible without delays.

As members well know, the criminal justice system is a shared responsibility between the federal, provincial, and territorial governments. Ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of a system is therefore also a shared responsibility with our government. This is why the Minister of Justice and her provincial and territorial counterparts have worked collaboratively and have held productive discussions on strategic and broad-based reforms to the criminal justice system.

In recent meetings, following the Jordan decision, ministers agreed on the need to have urgent and bold reforms to reduce those delays. All ministers understand the importance of collaboration and making sure that we move forward as soon as possible.

● (2215)

Bill C-75 responds to priority areas identified by the federal, provincial, and territorial ministers, including reforms in several key areas, such as bail, administration of justice offences, reclassification of criminal offences, preliminary inquiries, and judicial case management.

Bill C-75 also responds to the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General of Canada's mandate letter from our Prime Minister, in which she was instructed to conduct a review of the changes to the criminal justice system over the past decade, because as we know, there has been very little change in the last 35 years. She was asked to assess these changes and to address these gaps to ensure that our communities are safer and that we are getting good value for our money, and to make efforts to modernize the criminal justice system so that it is more efficient and more effective, and to do so in co-operation with all levels of government. This is a very important task, but one we view as an opportunity.

The criminal justice system review is an opportunity to create a criminal justice system that is compassionate and timely. The conversation began two years ago in round tables with lots of consultation. Our government is taking that information and those steps and using that to implement this important bill.

Furthermore, the bill also responds to a number of recommendations from the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on the delays in the justice system. The committee's final report contained 50 recommendations, 13 of which were identified as priorities. The committee recommended that steps be taken to eliminate preliminary inquiries or limit their use. Bill C-75 proposes to restrict the availability of preliminary inquiries to offences liable to life imprisonment, such as murder, kidnapping, or arson. By limiting the availability of preliminary inquiries to the most serious offences, it will limit the impact on many witnesses and victims from having to testify twice.

The committee also recommended that court time spent dealing with the administration of justice offences be reduced, as well as ensuring that conditions of release for the accused serve to protect the public.

Bill C-75 responds to the Senate committee report with respect to the administration of justice offences. Under the bill, both the police and crown attorneys will have the discretion to refer certain administration of justice offences, in other words, failure to comply with conditions of release and failures to appear in court or as required, to a judicial referral hearing as an alternative to laying or pursuing new charges. This would not apply, however, to situations where the conduct has caused physical, emotional, or economic harm, or property damage to a victim. At the judicial referral hearing, the judge or justice could take no action and have the accused released; could vary their bail conditions; or could detain them in custody. This reform will provide a new practical and efficient tool to allow bail conditions to be appropriately tailored while ensuring public safety.

The amendments proposed in Bill C-75 are substantive and urgently needed. Our government has the responsibility to act, and that is exactly what we are doing. All components of Bill C-75 will play a cumulative role in reducing delays in the areas where recommendations have been made. This is why I urge all members to support the bill and to send it to committee.

• (2220)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is ironic that the Liberals put the member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook up on a justice bill when, as we know in this House, I have been talking about the injustice of the minister's surf clam decision, where the minister arbitrarily took 25% of a quota and awarded it to none other than this member's brother. Therefore, my question is very short and sweet. I have asked the Prime Minister and the minister this question time and again. Where is the justice for the town of Grand Bank, and the hard-working families of Grand Bank, whose lives and jobs have potentially been put into question because this member's brother has been awarded a very lucrative quota by a very questionable decision?

The Deputy Speaker: I note that the hon. member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook was getting ready for his response. However, I listened carefully to the question by the member for Cariboo—Prince George and I am not sure that it actually lines up with the bill that is before the House. However, certainly, if the hon. member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook wishes to respond, then I am happy to allow him to do that as well.

The hon. member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, absolutely, because this is what this is all about. The Conservatives have been complaining now for a number of days about not having the opportunity to discuss and debate an important bill. Now that they have an opportunity to ask questions directly related to this, they refuse to do so and are talking about things that are not important here. It is very disappointing.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, the complaints from the opposition are, once again, that the government, in its open and transparent way, has shuttered debate for the 41st time. It is all about the Prime Minister's broken promises, and so forth. There is relevance here.

The hon. colleague just mentioned that all the opposition members want to talk about is something that is not important. I would say on behalf of the hard-working people of the town of Grand Bank that the Arctic surf clam decision is important.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Central Nova is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Coming back to your earlier comments, I believe, at the very least, there should be some tangential relevance to the question. The hon. member has stood up repeatedly now, going on about and seeking to wax eloquent about some topic completely unrelated to Bill C-75. Despite your suggestion, the hon. member addressed very appropriately the waste of time here, particularly when the opposition has been complaining about not having enough time. Therefore, I would ask that you rule this question irrelevant and out of order.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Central Nova for raising the point. He is right. We actually did speak about that.

One of the difficulties in determining relevance is that one has to hear where the member is going, and in a short period of time it is sometimes difficult to see exactly where that is until such time as the member lands there. I appreciate that the member raised this point of order just about the time that arrived. I do think in this case that this particular line of questioning is not really relevant to the motion that is before the House. Therefore, I leave it to the hon. member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook if he wishes to respond. I think in this case, the question is really not in order. However, if I come back to the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George, and he would like to rephrase his question, we will give him a moment to do that, and then we will see if we can get a question that is in fact on the subject.

Does the member for Cariboo—Prince George want to respond to the point of order?

• (2225)

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I do. Prior to the point of order, I was getting to the point. All I was going to offer is that the member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook had mentioned that all the opposition wants to do is talk about things that are not important. I just wanted to offer an opportunity for the member of Parliament to retract those comments, because I would offer that the comment that I made earlier is very important to the town of Grand Bank.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I find it quite funny because one important part of the bill talks about indigenous people and how we find them in the court system and correction centres. However, I understand the problem of the opposition. It does not understand that indigenous people are extremely important Canadians. When the surf clam was discussed three years ago with the Conservative Party, it did not even talk about indigenous people. There were no indigenous people in any proposals.

The Deputy Speaker: The time for questions and comments has now expired. We are resuming debate.

I will let the hon. member for Central Nova know that there are approximately eight minutes left in the time provided for debate on the motion before the House. I will give him advance time in the usual fashion.

The hon. member for Central Nova.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I assume I am down to seven minutes now, but it is appropriate because I have a speech about rendering the justice system more efficient, which is really a key part of the bill.

As I mentioned during some of the back and forth earlier, I had the absolute privilege of practising law as a commercial litigator for a number of years. I witnessed first-hand the injustices that result when dealing with administrative delays over the course of the court system on a particular piece of litigation. Transposed into the criminal context, many of the issues remain the same.

Bill C-75 purports to fix some of the very serious problems that are causing more and more people across Canada to experience administrative delays that lead to injustice.

In tabling this important legislation, our government is fulfilling its promise to move forward with comprehensive criminal justice reform. The bill makes amendments in six key areas: modernizing and streamlining bail; supporting victims of intimate partner violence; enhancing the approach to administration of justice offences, including and in particular for youth; restricting the availability of preliminary inquiries; reclassifying offences; strengthening case management powers; and improving the jury selection process.

Additionally, Bill C-75 makes legislative amendments that build on key areas of reform to promote efficiencies in the criminal justice system. Today, I am going to be outlining some important efficiency measures proposed in the bill, which may not be too headline-grabbing for the public, but are very important because they will enhance access to justice.

These measures would do a number of things, including facilitating remote appearances by way of the use of technology; enhancing the current plea inquiry process; clarifying the signing authority of clerks of the court; amending time frames for an accused to re-elect a mode of trial; streamlining the bail process to ensure swifter access to justice that would help reduce court backlogs; removing the endorsement requirements for out-of-province search warrants; and consolidating and clarifying the prosecutorial authority of the attorney general of Canada.

Bill C-75 responds to the Supreme Court of Canada's 2016 decision in Jordan, and it supports the Minister of Justice's mandate letter commitment to reform the criminal justice system. I will begin by discussing the amendments to remote appearances.

In her mandate letter from the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice received a mandate to undertake modernization efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system, including the improved use of information technology. The amendments in Bill C-75 relating to remote appearances would assist in achieving this important priority.

Currently, the Criminal Code allows parties and witnesses to appear by audio conference or video conference in specified circumstances and where it is either satisfactory to the court or where the court considers it appropriate in the circumstances. Bill C-75 would expand the use of remote appearances by allowing all those involved in criminal cases, including an accused, witnesses, counsel, judges or justices, interpreters, and sureties, to appear through the use of technology. These measures would increase access to justice, including in remote locations, which is particularly important for northern and rural Canada, and would streamline processes to reduce system costs, for example, by not requiring an accused to be transported to court or a witness to travel and attend in-person in all circumstances.

I will discuss briefly the plea inquiry process as well. At present, the Criminal Code sets out the conditions in which a guilty plea may be accepted by a court, for example, if it is satisfied that the plea is entered into voluntarily. The amendments in Bill C-75 would enhance the current plea inquiry process by adding a requirement that the court also be satisfied that the facts support the charge before accepting an accused's guilty plea.

False guilty pleas are a very real concern, particularly with respect to indigenous accused and accused persons from marginalized groups. I heard this testimony when we recently completed a study on indigenous women in the federal corrections system on the status of women committee, of which I am a proud member. However, the amendment in Bill C-75 would provide additional safeguards to ensure that the court has considered and is satisfied that the facts support the charge before accepting a guilty plea.

Oftentimes an accused person believes it is just easier to get through with the trial process and enter a guilty plea than it is to actually have the trial heard. This procedural safeguard would help prevent those false guilty pleas to ensure people, predominantly from disadvantage backgrounds, do not as a matter of course, for social and cultural reasons, potentially enter a false guilty plea. Resolving cases early by way of a guilty plea would spare victims from testifying and would also save court time.

The amendment would complement initiatives to encourage early case resolution and would avoid concerns surrounding false guilty pleas by ensuring the facts support a guilty plea. This would enhance the integrity of the administration of justice, while making the system more efficient.

●(2230)

This bill also includes amendments that would clarify the existing signing authority of clerks of the court who record judicial pronouncements made from the bench. The act of preparing and signing a court document is a completely administrative task that is often delegated to a clerk of the court. However, only a few Criminal Code provisions expressly provide that a clerk of the court can actually prepare and sign these documents.

To facilitate the administration of justice and enhance efficiencies in criminal court case processing, this bill would expressly provide that clerks of the court can sign documents that reflect judicial pronouncements made from the bench, unless otherwise provided by the Criminal Code or decided by the court. Related amendments to Criminal Code forms will also be made, to add uniformity and clarity surrounding the authority of clerks of the court to sign forms that record such judicial pronouncements.

To sum up this piece of the puzzle, we are going to push the work down to where it can be done most effectively and efficiently, at a lower cost, and in a faster way, so that more Canadians will experience greater access to justice than in fact do today.

The Criminal Code also sets out two time frames and circumstances in which accused persons may change their election or re-elect their mode of trial: 15 days after the completion of the preliminary inquiry, and 14 days before the first day appointed for the trial. Bill C-75 would change both timelines to 60 days. This change would ensure that the accused have sufficient time to appreciate the case against them before re-electing, and it would eliminate additional unnecessary steps required to prepare for trial. This change would also allow valuable court time and resources to be reallocated to other matters.

I will conclude by saying that this bill is really directed at curing certain injustices that exist within our system. In particular, some of the ones that I am most concerned with and have lived first-hand as a litigator in the court system are the administrative delays, which not only make it more difficult for a person to access justice, but contribute to the systemic inefficiencies that slow down the time to trial, add to the cost of systems, and do not serve the interests of Canadians.

This bill takes great steps to cure many of those defects in our system. I am proud to be supporting it, and I hope all members of the House do the same.

● (2235)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 10:36 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 29, 2018, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

May I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion, amendment, and amendment to the amendment to the House*]

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the amendment to the amendment.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment to the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment to the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 29, the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, June 11, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

* * *

FISHERIES ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-68, An Act to amend the Fisheries Act and other Acts in consequence, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

[*English*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: There are 59 motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-68. Motions Nos. 1 to 59 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the Table.

[*Translation*]

I will now put Motions Nos. 1 to 59 to the House.

[*English*]

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 1.

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 2.

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 3.

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 4.

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 5.

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 6.

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 7.

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 8.

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 9.

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 10.

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 11.

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 12.

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 13.

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 14.

Motion No. 15

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 15.

Motion No. 16

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 16.

Motion No. 17

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 17.

Motion No. 18

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 18.

Motion No. 19

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 19.

Motion No. 20

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 20.

Motion No. 21

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 21.

Motion No. 22

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 22.

Motion No. 23

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 23.

Motion No. 24

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 24.

Motion No. 25

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 25.

Motion No. 26

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 26.

Motion No. 27

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 27.

Motion No. 28

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 28.

Motion No. 29

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 29.

Motion No. 30

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 30.

Motion No. 31

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 31.

Motion No. 32

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 32.

Motion No. 33

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 33.

Motion No. 34

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 34.

Motion No. 35

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 35.

Motion No. 36

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 36.

Motion No. 37

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 37.

Motion No. 38

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 38.

Motion No. 39

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 39.

Motion No. 40

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 40.

Motion No. 41

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 41.

Motion No. 42

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 42.

Motion No. 43

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 43.

Motion No. 44

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 44.

Motion No. 45

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 45.

Motion No. 46

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 46.

Motion No. 47

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 47.

Motion No. 48

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 48.

Motion No. 49

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 49.

Motion No. 50

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 50.

Motion No. 51

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 51.

Motion No. 52

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 52.

Motion No. 53

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 53.

Motion No. 54

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 54.

Motion No. 55

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 55.

Motion No. 56

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 56.

Motion No. 57

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 57.

Motion No. 58

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 58.

Motion No. 59

That Bill C-68 be amended by deleting Clause 59.

● (2245)

He said: Mr. Speaker, it has been a fun day. This is the third time I have stood to speak on a piece of legislation today.

I do not know who they are, but there are people in the gallery who, for maybe an hour or so, have watched the festivities. All of us in the House should applaud the people in the gallery who are sitting through these festivities and thank them for paying attention to what we are doing. I am sorry it has not been riveting but very boring, but I thank them for being here. It is important.

Right now, we are talking about Bill C-68. Some of my colleagues across the way have said this is probably one of the most fundamental pieces of legislation we could debate this session, and perhaps even in the last decade. My comments will ring true from previous interventions on it. Bill C-68 is, from a policy perspective, another unnecessary piece of legislation aimed at making Canadians feel good, but without any basis in science. I already know what my colleagues are laughing at. It is the line I used, "unnecessary piece of legislation". That was to elicit that response.

As part of the economic action plan in 2012 in support of the responsible resource development plan, the previous Conservative government put forward changes to the Fisheries Act geared to strengthening the act and removing unnecessary bureaucratic red tape. I have sat in meetings at the fisheries committee time and time again, at which DFO officials talked about fish stocks. In successive governments, some of these officials from the department have appeared before, for example on the northern cod fishery, which we know is still at critical levels. Twenty-six years ago, it was identified as a critical fish stock. One of the things we have been challenged by, whether it is policy, a department, or management, is with how to grow our most critical fish stocks in Canada.

Back in 2012, as part of the economic action plan, the previous government decided it needed to do things a little differently. It needed to start thinking about removing some of the red tape and looking at ways to create more fish. Our changes supported a shift from managing impacts to all fish habitats. People will ask what that means. We heard previously that any body of water that a tube or some type of vessel could be floated on could be deemed a fish habitat, which means that a tailings pond or a pond on a construction site filled with rainwater could be deemed a fish habitat. The previous government focused on the regulatory regime and managing threats to the sustainability and ongoing productivity of Canada's commercial, recreational, and indigenous fisheries.

Instead of listening to experts in this process, the people who use our waterways and fish our rivers, the people who actually depend on our fisheries and waters to make a living, our indigenous peoples, the current government is turning a deaf ear to practicality and pushing forward through the use of time allocation, no less. As I said today, this is the 41st time it has moved time allocation. Again I go back to the Liberals' campaign promise that they would be the most open and transparent government in Canadian history and that they were going to let debate reign. What we have seen, instead, is that if they do not like the way things are happening, if they do not like the way the opposition is pressuring them, they just shut down the debate.

● (2250)

It has been probably two hours since I reminded Canadians who are listening and reminded colleagues across the way that the House does not belong me. It sure as heck does not belong to the folks across the way. This is not their House. This is Canadians' House. The 338 members of Parliament have been sent here by great Canadians to be the voices of those electors.

By shuttering debate on such an important piece of legislation as Bill C-68, what are the Liberals doing? They are saying to every opposition member of Parliament and all those Canadians who elected them that their point of view does not matter. The only ones that matters are the folks on the government side of the House.

Time and time again at committee, when we were studying the bill, we asked experts, academics, environmental groups, fishers, and industry whether the changes in 2012 really had damaging effects on our rivers, lakes, streams, and fish habitat. We asked for proof. How many witnesses came up with examples of lost protections or any examples of harmful alteration or disruption? There was not one witness who came forward with any evidence of that.

As a matter of fact, what we saw were the environmental groups, the usual suspects, who talked about how the Harper government members were ogres on the oceans and the environment. I beg to differ.

The Prime Minister, in the 2015 campaign, with his hand on his heart, said that our indigenous people were going to be our most important relationship. He said it not only then but before and all the way through this last little while, yet we have indigenous communities from coast to coast to coast that say that the consultation was a sham. It was not like the clam scam that we could talk about right now, and in my last discussion I did talk about that, where the minister arbitrarily took 25% of quota and allocated it to Liberal friends and families.

Bill C-68 is another feel-good piece of fluff to satisfy the environmental vote the Liberals were going after during the 2015 election. That was what they had to do. They were beholden and had to make sure that they followed through on their promise, but there was no evidence of any damage from the changes in 2012.

We asked industry at committee if any of those changes made it easier for projects to be approved. If we listen to the environmental groups and the Liberals, it was walk in one day, and an hour later, they had their permit and were tearing up everything. Industry made it clear to us that to move forward, it did not make it easier. As a matter of act, in some cases, it made it harder, but it was clearer.

● (2255)

Not only was it clearer for industry and stakeholders, it was also clearer for DFO to enforce. With that, I will rest.

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my hon. friend that this place is the voice of Canadians. In fact, I was so interested in what was going on with the Fisheries Act that I went back to the lengthy debate that happened in 2012 on the changes made by the last government to the Fisheries Act. Of course, there was not very much debate, because the changes were made as part of an omnibus budget bill that included all kinds of other things.

The one comment I will take exception to, the one thing I would like the hon. member to have a chance to address, is that he said these are unnecessary amendments. However, we went across Canada. The fisheries and oceans committee reviewed those changes that happened in 2012, and it came up with 32 recommendations, all of which were put into this act. In fact, there were hundreds of meetings coast to coast to coast; 2,163 online submissions; 5,438 e-book questionnaires; and 200-plus indigenous group submissions.

It sounds like Canadians are saying that this act can be improved. Why is the member saying these are unnecessary amendments?

● (2300)

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I did not say they were unnecessary amendments. My opening line was geared to elicit a response. We said this was an unnecessary piece of legislation because in our previous government we created a piece of legislation that was easier for DFO officials to enforce. It was easier for industry and conservation groups to build more fish, create more fish, and protect them at the same time.

Let me go back to 2015, when the current Prime Minister said that under his government, the Harper ways with omnibus bills would be gone. Just before this, we were debating a 400-page bill. The Liberals shutter debate. They still put through these omnibus bills. This is another example of broken promises by the current government.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I sit with the gentleman on the fisheries and oceans committee. I thought we did an awfully good job on Bill C-68. We went back and forth, we discussed amendments, we accepted some of each other's, and worked it right through. We were fixing years of neglect and cuts, cuts to science. Yes, it was easier for the DFO to administer the old act because the Conservatives gutted DFO's ability to do anything by cutting it back. It is pretty easy to follow the rules when there are only a few rules.

Does the member remember the testimony we heard from first nations, reflecting upon the fact that back in 2012-2013 it was very clear that the only voices the Conservatives heard in that consultation were the voices of industry, which showed in full measure in the bill they produced? Maybe the member can recall what we heard from indigenous people who felt totally shut out by that earlier process.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. colleague wants to talk cuts, let us talk about the $91 million they are cutting out of the departmental plan, or let us talk about the announcement that they are cutting the salmon enhancement program in British Columbia, the program that has educated 40,000 students all across British Columbia and that helped create more of our iconic species salmon, and helped our conservation groups, like Spruce City Wildlife in my riding. They announced they were going to do some small closures of some bases, and it was the pressure of the grassroots and the the opposition right across the bench that got them to reverse those decisions and actually reinvest in that iconic program, the salmon enhancement program. I will take no lesson from that gentleman there. We do great work on the committee, but he is just talking Liberal talking points right now.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his comments this evening and the work he does as our shadow minister for Fisheries and Oceans.

I concur with him, in that we had a very similar experience at the transportation committee. Not a single witness could provide an example of any negative effects on waterways from the changes made to the MPA by the previous Conservative government. In fact, at the committee when the Minister of Transport was asked if he could provide a single example, he simply refused until he was compelled to answer, and then he gave an answer that actually proved that the MPA put in place in 2012 was actually working.

I am wondering if the member had a similar experience during his study in committee.

● (2305)

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, the short response is yes. However, I do respect my hon. colleague from the government side who was up previously, in that we do great work at the fisheries committee when we put away our partisan jabs and talking points.

It was very interesting when we had the departmental officials before us. Whether it was the government side challenging the departmental officials or the opposition, we have had departmental officials, heads of departments, appearing before us who could not tell us critical information about their own department. They are managers of this, they are tasked with managing it, but they have not been doing it.

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of the amendments to the Fisheries Act.

For far too long we have taken our oceans for granted. This was demonstrated when, in 2012, the previous government decided to change the habitat protections without the support of, or proper engagement with, indigenous peoples, fishers and anglers, scientists, conservation groups, coastal communities, or the broader Canadian public.

By comparison, our government has listened to and worked with all Canadians and has encouraged everyone to be a part of this process. This bill is the result of that good work.

Bill C-68 has several key themes: partnership with indigenous peoples, supporting planning and integrated management, enhancing regulation and enforcement, improving partnership and collaboration, and monitoring and reporting back to Canadians.

During their review of Bill C-68, my colleagues at committee heard from many expert witnesses from right across the country. I would like to take this time to talk about what they heard and the concrete steps they proposed to help improve the legislation even further for the benefit of Canadians and the benefit of future generations.

From the environmental NGO community and members across the aisle, the committee heard about the importance of water flow for fish habitat. The government supported the associated amendments put forward at committee, and we believe they will contribute to the effective management of fish habitat.

The committee also heard from industry groups seeking amendments to the rules proposed for the processing of applications for habitat authorizations during the transition from the current legislation. In response, the committee adopted an amendment to provide for clearer transition provisions.

The committee also heard about strengthening the federal government's legal obligations when major fish stocks are in trouble. That is why the committee proposed the inclusion of requirements, under the legislation, that the minister sustainably manage or rebuild fish stocks that are prescribed in regulations. Legislation will require that when exceptions are made for environmental or socio-economic reasons, Canadians will be informed and will be provided with a rationale for those decisions. As with every decision, our aim is to sustainably manage fisheries resources for the long-term benefit of all Canadians.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the committee for their contributions to Bill C-68.Their previous study engaged Canadians right across the country and led to 32 recommendations, all of which are included in this legislation. Their further work after second reading has again contributed significantly to this bill, and Canadians will surely benefit from their diligence and their hard work.

This bill includes the re-introduction of the prohibition against the harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish habitat, otherwise known as the HADD provisions, as well as the prohibition against the death of fish by means other than fishing. There are measures to allow for the better management of large and small projects that may be harmful to fish or fish habitat through a new permitting program for big projects and through codes of practice for smaller projects.

These amendments will enable the regulatory authorities that will allow for establishing a list of designated projects, consisting of works, undertakings, and activities for which a permit will always be required. Our goal is to streamline processes and provide greater certainty while protecting the environment, and we have engaged with indigenous peoples, provinces and territories, and other stakeholders to make sure that we capture the right kind of projects under this designated project list.

Habitat loss and degradation and changes to fish passage and flow rates are all contributing to the decline of freshwater and marine fish habitats in Canada. It is imperative for Canada to restore degraded fish habitats. That is why amendments to the Fisheries Act include the consideration of restoration as a part of project decision-making.

One message that we heard clearly when we engaged Canadians in developing this bill was that much of the public trust in government was lost through the 2012 changes. Throughout the review of the changes to the Fisheries Act, a common message received was the need for improved access to information on the government's activities related to the protection of fish and fish habitat as well as access to project decisions and information. We listened and we introduced amendments to establish a public registry, which will enable transparency and open access. This registry will allow Canadians to see whether their government is meeting its obligations and to hold us accountable for federal decision-making with regard to the protection of our marine ecosystems. The new considerations under the amendments to the Fisheries Act seek to more clearly guide the responsibility of theMinister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard when making decisions.

● (2310)

The addition of new purpose and consideration provisions provide a framework for the proper management and control of fisheries, and for the conservation and protection of fish and fish habitat, including by preventing pollution.

As we all know, fisheries resources and aquatic habitats have important social, cultural, and economic significance for many indigenous peoples. Respect for the rights of indigenous peoples of Canada, as well as taking into account their unique interest and aspirations in fisheries-related economic opportunities, and the protection of fish and fish habitat is one way we are showing our commitment to renewing relationships with indigenous peoples.

Amendments to the Fisheries Act include ministerial authority to make regulations to establish long-term spatial restrictions to fishing activities under the act, specifically for the purpose of conserving and protecting marine biodiversity and supporting our international commitment to protect at least 10% of our marine and coastal areas by 2020.

As I mentioned earlier, our government has reached out to Canadians in developing this bill. We listened to the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development and the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, and provided direction for the restoration and recovery of fish habitat and stocks.

We listened to environmental groups and adopted measures aimed at rebuilding depleted fish stocks by requiring decisions affecting a stock in the critical zone to consider whether measures are in place aimed at rebuilding the stock and when habitat degradation is a factor in the decline of the stock, whether measures will be in place to restore such habitat. We have presented in this bill the appropriate safeguards to sustain the health of our oceans and fisheries for our future generations.

We have also heard from Canadians on other important issues. We have proposed amendments to the Fisheries Act that would prohibit fishing for a cetacean, whales, when the intent is to take it into captivity unless circumstances so require, such as when the cetacean is injured, in distress, or is in need of care.

Over 72,000 Canadians make their living directly from fishing and fishing-related activities. Many are middle-class, self-employed, inshore harvesters. The minister has been clear on his commitment to make inshore independence more effective. Amendments speak to a specific authority in the Fisheries Act, rather than policy, to develop regulations supporting the independence of the inshore commercial licence-holders and will enshrine into legislation the ability to make regulations regarding the owner-operator and fleet separation policies in Atlantic Canada and Quebec.

By restoring the lost protections and providing these modern safeguards, the government is delivering on its promise, as set out in the mandate letter from the Prime Minister to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard.

Since introduction of this bill, we have heard support from a broad range of Canadians for these amendments, which will return Canada to the forefront of protection of our rivers and coasts, and fish for generations to come. I urge all hon. members on both sides of the House to join with me in supporting the bill.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want to apologize to the House for my excitement. I am excited when we are talking about Bill C-68 and anything to do with fisheries. However, as our hon. colleague was speaking, a player who I coached in my community of Prince George, Brett Connolly, and his Washington Capitals just won the Stanley Cup. I am very happy for one of our players. He is a great kid.

I may not get a chance to congratulate him, but maybe our hon. colleagues could join me in actually wishing Brett Connolly and the Washington Capitals congratulations.

● (2315)

Mr. Terry Beech: Mr. Speaker, my congratulations to any Capitals fans out there.

Today, we are discussing Bill C-68. It is interesting. For the last month or so, I have been answering these unsubstantiated claims in the House on the surf clam issue. In fact, the member opposite found a way to bring it up on a previous bill we were debating some 10 to 15 minutes ago.

I understand why the Conservatives do not want to talk about the improvements we are making to the Fisheries Act, because this is broadly supported by Canadians. The reason it is broadly supported by Canadians is because we consulted broadly, from coast to coast to coast. Canadians are proud of the fact that we are restoring protections, that we are installing modern safeguards, that we are taking steps to bring in hundreds of thousands of square kilometres of new marine protections to ensure those 72,000 jobs, those middle-class jobs that are provided in the fishing industry right across the country, grow to maybe 100,000 jobs or 150,000 jobs.

That is what this government is focused on, and that is what we will continue to focus on.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I salute the bill, because for the first time in 150 years, it recognizes the importance of rebuilding overfished stocks by creating a legal duty to develop plans, et cetera. However, I understand that this will be left to the regulations. While I understand that it is often useful to provide more detail, I wonder if the member shares my concern that it may never come to pass if those regulations are never enacted.

Mr. Terry Beech: Mr. Speaker, the member for Victoria and I have had a chance to work together on a number of issues with another British Columbian. It seems to be an all-British Columbian cast so far. I expect we will hear from other parts of the country.

When it comes to the introduction of these measures within the Fisheries Act to enable the rebuilding of fish stocks, this is absolutely critical. Any person who looks at what has happened to fish stocks on any coast, on almost any measure, has seen tremendous declines.

When we look at the goal posts we set, where do we set the bar for the critical zone? Where do we set the bar for the healthy zone? Our government, for the first time, is not just focused on the protection of species. We are interested in the restoration of species and the restoration of our marine environment. Anyone who reads the amendments will see, all the way through, that every segment of this legislation is built on restoring our fish stocks to traditional levels of abundance for the economic, social, and cultural success of our coastal communities.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our hon. colleague mentioned the unsubstantiated surf clam allegations. Here are the facts, and these are substantiated by court documents. The minister's most senior official also substantiated that it was the minister's decision to award a lucrative surf clam quota to a sitting Liberal MP's brother. The government likes to say that it was all about reconciliation. The minister's most senior official confirmed that they had the least amount of indigenous participation. The Liberal premier of Newfoundland and the Liberal fisheries minister of Newfoundland said that this has nothing to do with reconciliation.

On the claim that our hon. colleague just made about unsubstantiated facts, the Ethics Commissioner has investigated. It has been substantiated.

Mr. Terry Beech: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-68 would restore lost protections, including the HADD protections, and it would strengthen the role of indigenous communities.

When I was first made Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, one of the things I did in my first summer was make sure that I went out and visited as many indigenous communities as I could get to. Most indigenous communities had not had a parliamentary secretary or a minister of fisheries and oceans visit for maybe one or two generations, if at all.

This legislation would strengthen the role of indigenous communities. It would provide an increased role in decision-making, policy-making, and monitoring. It would go right alongside our investments in indigenous communities, including $250 million to give more indigenous communities access to the fisheries. That is going to cause generational changes that will be very positive for all Canadians, especially indigenous communities.

● (2320)

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to be one of the British Columbians to whom my friend referred. It seems this is a fully British Columbian night.

I am proud to speak in support of Bill C-68. I want to salute the enormous work and contribution made by our fisheries critic, the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam. This bill goes a long way toward restoring lost protections to the Fisheries Act and introducing some modern safeguards.

We believe that the legislation to restore the HADD prohibition, which is the prohibition against harmful alteration, disruption, and destruction, should have been introduced immediately following the last federal election. Then we could have been working together to modernize the act from there. However, we did not see that from the Liberals. Therefore, the modernization that we could have supported earlier took a bit of time to get in place, and of course we still have to enact it. I believe that Bill C-68 is okay, although it could have been a lot better, for reasons I will explain.

We introduced a series of amendments to further strengthen the Fisheries Act. Although we were successful in seeing a couple of them pass, the ones that were defeated were also important, for reasons I will come to. They would have strengthened the act and had positive impacts on the health and sustainability of the fish populations and their habitats for generations to come.

Bill C-68 restores much of what was lost under the changes made by the previous Conservative government in 2012, and it introduces a number of positive provisions that we support. I would like to talk about those before I come to some of the deficiencies, in our view.

First, returning the prohibition against the harmful alteration, disruption, and destruction of fish habitat, and its applicability to all native fish and fisheries, as well as the prohibition on causing death of fish by means other than fishing, were critical. The fact that they were restored is an excellent feature of this bill.

Second, including in the act key provisions to strengthen how it is interpreted is important, such as a purpose statement, along with considerations for decision-making and factors to inform the making of regulations under this bill that reflect key sustainability principles.

Third, the bill introduces provisions that address the rebuilding of depleted fish populations. We talked about that earlier.

Fourth, it would establish a public registry to support the assessment of cumulative effects and to enhance the transparency of decision-making.

Fifth, strengthening provisions with respect to ecologically significant areas would move us from concept to action, at last.

Sixth, there is greater recognition of indigenous rights and knowledge, particularly in light of the historic commitment of the House in Bill C-262 to enshrine the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Finally, the fact that there is going to be a statutorily mandated review every five years is also an important evergreen provision in this bill.

The bill was amended at committee. One of the important amendments was the rebuilding of fish stocks section, because the core function of Fisheries and Oceans Canada is to manage our fish populations for the long term so that we have a sustainable fishery. That is what this is all about. If they are not at a sustainable level, we will not be able to allocate the fish because we will not have the fish to allocate. That is obviously important. For the first time in 150 years, Bill C-68 recognizes the importance of rebuilding overfished stocks by creating a legal duty to develop plans aimed at moving stocks out of a critical zone. I think that this is really important, if, as I suggested earlier, regulations are actually made to do the work that is necessary.

These are welcome and long overdue. I think we have to be sober about the state of our fisheries. Since 1970, over half of the biomass of our fisheries has disappeared. By some estimates, only slightly more than one third of our stocks are still considered healthy in this country. At least 21 of Canada's fish stocks are in the critical zone, and our fishing industry is precariously balanced on the continued abundance of only a few species.

● (2325)

Therefore, these changes are important, and I salute the government for bringing them in. However, I also have to flag some concerns. First, the minister can make exceptions to these requirements under certain conditions. We have to make sure that this discretion to exempt fish stocks does not get abused. Second, the law only applies to what are defined as "major fish stocks", a phrase that will only be defined in future regulations. This creates a situation in which the government could circumvent the intent of the legislation by dragging its heels indefinitely on adding fish stocks to the regulations, thereby not requiring sustainable management measures or a rebuilding plan. These concerns were raised by my colleague at the fisheries committee, and I want to put them on the record again this evening.

The NDP introduced a number of amendments to Bill C-68, 22 of them to be exact. A few of those improvements are still valid. First, the NDP submitted amendments to broaden the information base so that the public registry captures all projects, and to ensure compensation for the residual harm to fish habitat caused by small or low-risk projects. Those amendments, unfortunately, were defeated.

Second, explicit protection for environmental flows and fish passages was an issue, and we proposed amendments to strengthen those provisions for the free passage of fish and for securing the environmental flows needed to protect fish and fish habitat. I am happy to say they were passed at committee and are part of the bill.

Third, I have already alluded to the recognition of indigenous rights and knowledge. The committee heard testimony, for example, from Matt Thomas of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation. New Democrats believe that reconciliation should be a part of all legislation. A true nation-to-nation relationship with Canada's indigenous peoples, consistent with our Constitution, should be fully embraced and reflected in the Fisheries Act. The amendments along those lines were defeated.

Fourth, on measures to increase transparency and accountability, the committee heard eloquent testimony from Linda Nowlan from West Coast Environmental Law, who made some great suggestions to increase transparency and accountability. The NDP made amendments to that effect, but they were all defeated.

Fifth, provisions to apply owner-operator and fleet separation policies to all coasts were proposed. Some of the most compelling testimony we heard was from young fishers from the west coast, and yet the section in the act talks about an independent inshore commercial fishery as being in "Atlantic Canada and Quebec". Canada's New Democrats fully support putting owner-operator and fleet separation policies in the Fisheries Act, but we wonder why we did not do the same thing for our Pacific coast. First nations and independent fishermen on the west coast want the same policy as Atlantic Canada. New Democrats moved an amendment to open that door, but the door was closed and the amendment was defeated.

I want to make one further point before I conclude. We support the bill. We recognize the need to protect fish habitat, but I cannot let the opportunity go by of talking about the impact that the Kinder Morgan, now Government of Canada, tanker project will have, and the possibility of its destroying, with a devastating spill of diluted bitumen, the essential habitat and aquatic ecosystems that our fish depend on.

● (2330)

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member his thoughts on enforcement. As he knows, the government is putting in more than $280 million to go along with the amendment to the Fisheries Act. A portion of that would go to enforcement. We heard that the previous government felt that the reason investigations into illegal activities on our waters had gone down by 80% was because of how efficient they were. I thought it might have been because of the cuts in the 94 full-time enforcement positions that were taken out under the previous government. I am wondering if my friend opposite has an opinion on that.

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, my friend the parliamentary secretary raises an excellent point. Supporting the amendments with $280 million is important, and enforcement is a critical aspect of any of these sections. As an example, the habitat alteration, destruction, and disruption section is central to protecting fish habitat, because without fish habitat, we do not have fish. Logging and other industries on the west coast n particular can devastate a stream on which salmon depend for rearing, and if we do not have people on the ground prepared to enforce those sections, we will never have any benefit from them.

Therefore, I could not agree more with the principle, but what it takes is not money as much as political will. Neither the current government nor the last government has shown itself ready to take the steps. Our environmental laws are replete with sections with large fines and great political commitments, but if we do the statistical analysis and see how often they are actually applied, the answer is pretty devastating: rarely, if ever.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague indicated, last week the Liberals voted for a piece of legislation, Bill C-262, to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In that bill, they made very specific commitments, especially around article 19, under which laws of general application would receive free, prior, and informed consent from first nations.

Does my colleague believe that the Liberals, in turning down those amendments, were living up to the spirit of the vote that took place last week?

I also want to note that there is another member from British Columbia in the chamber tonight.

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, I want to also recognize my friend from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo for completing the cast of British Columbia characters tonight. We need a token non-British Columbian in this debate, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps you could arrange that later.

On article 19 on free, prior, and informed consent, it is interesting that the bill we passed probably does not have retroactive effect, but that does not mean that a bill like this, which is not yet enacted, should not be read, interpreted, applied, and implemented in the spirit of the historic declaration that this House made. That declaration, if properly applied, could be as important as section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, for Canada's indigenous people, but it will take political will and a commitment to the spirit of reconciliation that is reflected in that document. I just hope the government puts its money, its enforcement action, and its policy where our collective mouth is as we pass this important legislation. If we do not do it, it will just be another bill on the shelf.

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I just want to complete the B.C. roster this evening.

I used to be the regional manager for southeastern British Columbia in the Ministry of Environment. When I first became regional manager, there were four federal fisheries officers working in southeastern B.C. The plan was to have 12, six biologists and six enforcement officers, but by the time the Harper Conservative government was done, there were zero fisheries employees of any kind in the southern interior.

I would like to ask my colleague whether he is hopeful that, along with this bill, new resources will be coming to British Columbia to better manage our fish in the interior as well.

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to note the member for Kootenay—Columbia. We have completed the geographic sweep of the province now—north, south, east, and west, and a little urban as well—so I am very proud to be here not only as a Canadian but also as a British Columbian participating in this debate.

There is absolutely no doubt that the Harper government gutted the enforcement of the Fisheries Act. It took out the sections we talked about, which were so central, and then it took away the people who could apply them. The Liberal government has enforcement money, but does it have the political will?

Justice Cohen, in his historic report on the fisheries, talked extensively about the failure to enforce environmental legislation such as the Fisheries Act. I salute the government for putting money in place, but we really have to make sure that it is prepared to also put in place legal resources and other tools so that we can get convictions and get the big fines that are contemplated, and do the kind of planning that is so necessary for cumulative effects, rebuilding the stocks, and all of the other things that have promise in this bill but will only be implemented if money and political will are in place.

● (2335)

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Victoria asked, and as the good book says, "Ask and you will receive". We have a member from Alberta here, standing to represent another province in this great debate.

I hope members will indulge me while I quickly mention my friends and colleagues, Andrea Khanjin, Lindsey Park, and David Piccini, who won their seats this evening in the Ontario election. It was a pleasure serving with them in Ottawa and knowing them as friends. I am very proud of them tonight, and I want them to know that.

I rise to speak on Bill C-68, an act to amend the Fisheries Act. For my whole life, from the Fraser River all the way to Ontario's Rideau Lakes, my passion for fish, fishing, and preserving and sustaining fish stocks is very important to me. I am passionate about preserving and sustaining fish and fish habitat, but I see little reason to support Bill C-68, a flawed bill that will over-regulate and would solve a problem that does not really exist.

Canada has strong protections in place to ensure the preservation of fish and fish habitats, but there is always room for improvement. However, the Liberal government has rejected any amendments from the committee, amendments that would ensure the best legislation for Canadians.

The government introduced Bill C-68, which introduces a number of changes to the Fisheries Act. However, it ignores some of the major findings from a report from the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans that was presented to the House of Commons in February 2017. On September 19, 2016, the fisheries committee, including Liberal members, agreed to the following motion. They would:

> ...review and study the scope of the application of the Fisheries Act, and specifically the serious harm to fish prohibition: how the prohibition is implemented to protect fish and fish habitat; the capacity of Fisheries and Oceans Canada to deliver on fish and fish habitat protection through project review, monitoring, and enforcement; the definitions of serious harm to fish and commercial, recreational, and Aboriginal fisheries; the use of regulatory authorities under the Fisheries Act; and other related provisions of the act, and provide its recommendations in a report to the House.

The committee convened 10 meetings in Ottawa, from October 31 to December 12 in 2016, before presenting this report to the House of Commons in February 2017. Overall, the committee heard from 50 different witnesses during the study and received over 188 submissions and briefing notes. It was a comprehensive study, which, if the government were truly committed to strengthening the role of committees in this Parliament, would have formed the basis for Bill C-68. However, Bill C-68 essentially ignores the committee's report, including one of the most important recommendations contained in the report. This recommendation stated:

> Any revision of the Fisheries Act should review and refine the previous definition of HADD due to the previous definition's vulnerability to being applied in an inconsistent manner and the limiting effect it had on government agencies in their management of fisheries and habitats in the interest of fish productivity.

Following testimony from 50 witnesses and briefing notes from more than 180 associations, groups, and individuals, it was agreed that a return to HADD was undesirable and that should the government return to HADD, it needed to be refined and further reviewed. However, Bill C-68 ignores the recommendation completely and introduces a return to HADD.

Now HADD is referred to in subsection 35(1) of the legislation, which states, "No person shall carry on any work, undertaking or activity that results in the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat." Essentially this means that any sort of development that is harmful, alters, disrupts, or destroys any fish habitat could be stopped or not approved by the government.

I have friends who have personally experienced the overzealous regulation of the Department of Fisheries in its enforcement of HADD. A dear friend of mine, who has played a senior role in the air cadets in western Canada, told me of how much trouble he had dealing with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans a number of years ago before the Conservatives made reforms. My friend needed to renovate a firing range for the air cadets. This was a public range that was used by private individuals and the air cadets to practice. He was required by new government regulations to renovate this range in order to make it live up to the codes that the government had set for it.

• (2340)

In the process of dealing with this one set of government regulations, he quickly ran afoul of another set of government regulations. Every spring, during the snow melt, a small stream would form and run straight through the range. For 10 months of the year, one could hardly tell that a stream existed. There was no water, as it would dry up. However, once DFO officials got involved, they discovered traces of a common fish that could have been in the stream. They immediately halted the renovations to the gun range, which had operated for decades, because of the possibility that a fish habitat existed on the range. It could only have been there for less than two months of the year, because that is the only time there was water.

Because they were not able to renovate the range because of these old DFO regulations the Conservatives had removed, they were unable to recertify the range. Effectively, they shut down the range, depriving air cadets and private individuals of a facility necessary for their training and improvement.

That is a personal story of how some regulations, although they are intended to do good things, can really impact the everyday activities of Canadians in a way that does not really achieve the accomplishment. That is why we need to review and make clear what HADD really means.

As the committee report noted, this section was applied inconsistently and was oftentimes very unclear. Developers were often bogged down in battles over what constituted fish development, and it was an inconsistent roadblock for projects. Therefore, in 2012, the Conservative government removed HADD provisions and replaced them with the following:

> No person shall carry on any work, undertaking or activity that results in serious harm to fish that are part of a commercial, recreational or Aboriginal fishery, or to fish that support such a fishery.

That is a very broad way of putting it. It captures a lot of the environmental effects, but it also introduces a certain level of judgment. There is a balance between the environment and the economy, and when we have that judgment, we just cannot have something that says that nothing will be done if it does any harm to fish. We need to look at whether it is a serious harm or not. When we introduce that level of judgment, it allows us to get to the best decisions.

This previous Conservative law had a very clear and more universally accepted interpretation. It was accepted, and it struck an important balance between development and conservation. I submit that this is the right balance.

The committee report we did together with the government recognized this by cautioning against a return to HADD provisions. However, although the Liberals want to talk a big game about empowering committees, they ignored this recommendation.

The consultation was done for the government. As I said earlier, there were more than 50 witnesses at the committee and more than 180 submissions. All the Liberals needed to do was read the report, and they would have seen in black and white that a return to HADD provisions was not favourable among stakeholders. Not one single individual or organization was able to present the committee with any scientific proof of harm that resulted from the elimination of HADD in the 2012 legislation. Therefore, I think we must assume that the 2012 legislation was working quite well.

The government refused to listen to a committee and rejected all the amendments. The government's approach to legislative, regulatory, and policy frameworks governing infrastructure projects, from a gun range to the way local farmers manage their property, will cause competitive disadvantages for Canadian companies across Canada and a massive regulatory headache for everyday Canadians.

We will not have a chance to make the necessary adjustments on this side of the House, but I urge our colleagues in the other place to take a long, serious look at Bill C-68 and make any necessary recommendations to this flawed legislation.

● (2345)

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's speech intently, particularly the story about the gun range. We heard similar stories about fields and drainage ditches and the like.

We know that industry wants certainty on their timelines and on their requirements. We also know that we have to start addressing cumulative effects, because we know that the effects of many small projects can be just as significant as the effect of one large project. To balance this, we have developed what we call codes of practice. Does the member opposite support the codes of practice as laid out in Bill C-68?

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Mr. Speaker, we have to be very clear. We are not always talking about industry. It is like a dirty word when we say industry, but the example I gave was clearly a person who is a volunteer who runs an air cadet squadron and was trying to make the community a better place, and the government is putting in these regulations, oftentimes regulations that conflict with each other and result in nothing getting done.

I would not support the codes of practice, because in this case, they are just a further regulatory burden that gets in the way of everyday people trying to move on with their lives and help their communities.

Mr. Terry Beech: Mr. Speaker, during the member's speech, he stated that they were able to find no scientific proof of harm. Of course, it is hard to find scientific proof if they have fired all of the scientists, or they are muzzling the scientists they do have so they cannot even report what they are hearing in their own research.

Does the member opposite support the $197 million that our government invested in hiring new scientists within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans?

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Mr. Speaker, I note that I am answering a second question from the hon. member. That said, the government has been in power for over two and a half years. If the Liberals could find the science on this, then surely they have scientists they are not muzzling, or, at least, that they are claiming they are not muzzling. They have scientists they are claiming they are funding. Why can they not find the research from these scientists? If they cannot find that evidence, I submit that the evidence is not there to be had.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was hoping to address this topic as well in a later speech. I do want to point out that there are many more people in this House who are interested in discussing this than simply those from B.C. We have Ontario. I can understand why the Liberals and New Democrats tonight would not want to talk about Ontario, because we have just seen what happened in Ontario. I want to congratulate Premier Doug Ford for his victory.

My question for my colleague is regarding the HADD provisions that this bill addresses, and the inconsistency with how those rules were applied before by DFO officials, which created a huge problem for those who were trying to get approvals done. I wonder if my colleague could speak more to that issue.

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Mr. Speaker, the HADD provisions in the legislation just put an entire blanket over everything and created a level of fear where things could not get done. That is why we had to introduce, as Conservatives in the previous government, new legislation that introduced a certain level of judgment, that there would have to be a reasonableness test: Is this this fish stock really at risk? Is there a significant impact on this?

They have to weigh the costs and benefits of these things, and that is what we need in this legislation.

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, does the member opposite truly recognize how galvanizing the gutting of the Fisheries Act by the previous government was for British Columbians? HADD was respected. HADD developed security and confidence at the local level and all the way through the system. I would ask that the member justify the kinds of cuts and devastating evisceration by the previous government of the Fisheries Act.

● (2350)

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Mr. Speaker, I can say that I have first-hand knowledge of fishing down the Fraser and Harrison rivers. I caught a lot of sturgeon there back in the day. I talked to those fishermen and I really did not hear any negativity about the government's legislation. It is a sturgeon fishery. We catch them, and it is catch and release. In my experience, there was nothing but content with the way the general policy was done. I do not know what this member is alluding to, but from my experience with the fishermen on the west coast, the reasonableness test that we introduced was not opposed by the people in B.C.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise tonight to speak to Bill C-68, an act to amend the Fisheries Act, a lengthy bill that would have a number of impacts on fisheries and fish stocks across Canada. The bill would also have wide-ranging implications for economic development for farmers, rural municipalities, and others.

I am from an Ontario riding. While members may not think there are a lot of fish in Ontario, we have a thriving fishing industry in the Great Lakes and also in many of our smaller communities. In fact, right down the road from my farm is a fish hatchery that supplies fingerlings across the world. Fish and fish habitat is important to all of us in Ontario as well.

It is my understanding that the fisheries and oceans committee conducted a full study of the 2012 changes made to the Fisheries Act, and conducted a full study of changes brought in by Bill C-68. I would like to focus most of my comments on the testimony heard during the committee's study of the 2012 changes.

The committee started its study in October 2016 and presented a report to the House in February 2017. The committee heard from 50 different witnesses during the study and received over 188 submitted briefing notes. It was a very comprehensive study, and it would have been a useful tool for the government to use when it was drafting this legislation.

The study looked directly at the changes that the previous government, our Conservative government, made in 2012 to the Fisheries Act, changes that significantly improved it.

One of the significant changes that was made in 2012 was a shift away from what was commonly referred to as HADD, which stands for "harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat". It is contained within subsection 35(1) of the bill where it is stated, "No person shall carry on any work, undertaking or activity that results in the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat." Essentially, this means that any sort of development that could be seen to be harmful to, altering, disrupting or destroying fish habitats would be subject to an immense amount of review and red tape, and could be stopped or completely prohibited.

It is unclear, however, about what constituted a fish habitat. It was found that the DFO applied this definition in a inconsistent manner, and others played fast and loose with this term and used it broadly to apply to waterways that really had no impact at all on fish stocks. The system was ineffective and was a nightmare for development. Worst of all, after all this red tape and bureaucratic interference, it had no measurable success in protecting or preserving fish populations.

The changes in 2012 brought in a much simpler and effective definition to ensure fish were protected but that reasonable projects could still move forward. The definition at that time was "No person shall carry on any work, undertaking or activity that results in serious harm to fish that are part of a commercial, recreational or Aboriginal fishery, or to fish that support such a fishery." This definition is much more effective and provides certainty and clarity for developers, for farmers, for fishermen, for first nations, and for others.

In the report from the fisheries and oceans committee, the third recommendation stated, "Any revision of the Fisheries Act should review and refine the previous definition of HADD due to the previous definition's vulnerability to being applied in an inconsistent manner". This is the heart of why HADD was changed in 2012. It was applied in such an inconsistent and subjective manner. The recommendation went on to say, "and the limiting effect it had on government agencies in their management of fisheries and habitats in the interest of fish productivity."

I am confused as to why we are now seeing what looks to be a return to HADD in Bill C-68. It does not make any sense. The committee testimony is there in black and white, and it was heard time and again when the committee studied Bill C-68.

We all know that when the previous government brought in the 2012 changes, environmental associations and others threw their hands up in the air and screamed that these changes would be the death of all fish in Canada. However, the proof is just not there.

● (2355)

It is my fear here that the government is simply returning to the pre-2012 provisions to appease these groups.

One impact that is not always clear to many is the impact that farmers face due to the Fisheries Act, and it will be 10 times worse under a system that uses the HADD definition. When farmers are looking to expand their farm or develop their farmland, they can get caught up in reviews of their projects under the Fisheries Act. A return to HADD would make the lives of farmers much more difficult.

When testifying before the committee, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture stated that prior to 2012 there were "lengthy bureaucratic applications for permitting and authorizations", but the 2012 changes "drastically improved the timeliness and cost of conducting regular maintenance and improvement of activities to their farm."

That is so crucial, because farmers can get caught up in this red tape and actually be prevented from moving forward with improving their farmland or construction of buildings.

The CFA expanded on this by stating that:

> It is CFA's position that a complete revert to reinstate all provisions of the Fisheries Act as they were would be unproductive, would re-establish the same problems for farmers, and would provide little improvement....

This was again reiterated during the study of Bill C-68 at the fisheries and oceans committee.

Farmers do not want to return to a pre-2012 system. In fact, no one but those who oppose development want a return to the pre-2012 system. The government should stop catering to these interest groups and abandon this plan.

It is not just farmers who have concerns, though. The Canadian Electricity Association has said that Bill C-68 is "one step forward but two steps back."

They went on to state:

> CEA is particularly concerned that the government has chosen to return to pre-2012 provisions of the Fisheries Act that address 'activity other than fishing that results in the death of fish, and the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction (HADD) of fish habitat. In practical terms, this means that virtually any action, without prior authorization, could be construed as being in contravention of this Act. Consequently, the reinstatement of these measures will result in greater uncertainties for existing and new...energy projects that directly support Canada's clean growth agenda and realize its climate change objectives.

To make a long story short, this is bad news for Canadian development and will have no positive impact on the protection of fish populations in Canada.

The government had an opportunity to make this legislation work when it was offered reasonable amendments during the committee clause-by-clause study. Unfortunately, again, as in so many instances when the Liberals talk about being open and amenable to amendments, when it comes to the actual committee work, committee members are always overpowered by the majority of Liberals on the committee, who refused the amendments.

As we have witnessed time and again, the Liberals do not care about rural Canadians or development. I only hope Canadians will listen to our message of positive change and send them packing next October.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was a wonderful talk.

One of the issues we spoke of earlier was that the fisheries department plan actually shows, over the next three-year period, a $600-million cut to funding for fisheries and oceans. I wonder if my colleague could comment on the massive cuts the Liberals have planned, while at the same time standing up tonight to rail on and on about previous cuts made by the Conservatives.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Speaker, it is pretty obvious there is a pattern here. The Liberals say one thing but do another. All through the 2015 campaign, we heard time and time again that there would be no more omnibus bills, that the election would be the last first past the post, and on and on with promises.

Liberals were talking about no cuts, and here we have all these cuts, which will have a devastating impact on fisheries and oceans.

● (2400)

The Deputy Speaker: There will be four minutes remaining in the time for questions and comments for the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga when the House next resumes debate on the question.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on May 11, I asked the justice minister to explain her failure to fill judicial vacancies in this country, and I mentioned how this unacceptable shortage of judicial appointments has led to a situation in which many Canadians are denied access to the justice they dearly deserve.

I will remind the minister of the struggles currently being faced by the family of Dwayne Demkiw. They live in my riding of Saskatoon—Grasswood. Their son, Dwayne Demkiw, was murdered on May 31, 2015. His remains were discovered on April 5, 2016, but his accused murderer is not scheduled to stand trial until 2019. It is unacceptable that Dwayne's family will wait nearly four years, from the time of their son's disappearance until 2019, in order to see some semblance of justice for the loved one they have lost. It is a tragic burden on the victim's family, a burden they should never have been forced to bear, and yet the Liberal government is not doing anywhere near enough to address this problem and remedy the injustices suffered by the Demkiw family.

Alberta, where the trial is scheduled to take place, currently ranks among the top provinces in the country, with some of the highest numbers of judicial vacancies. As of June 1, there are eight vacancies in the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench alone. Across Canada, there are 57 judicial vacancies that have not been filled. Those vacancies translate into a delayed justice system, which only intensifies the hurt felt by the victims of crime, such as the Demkiw family. As a result, the rights of victims and their families are brushed aside and negatively impacted due to the failure of the justice minister to deliver an effective, efficient, and compassionate justice system to Canadians.

Delays in our justice system provide no closure for victims and their families, and do nothing to improve the lowered confidence that Canadians have in this system. No one benefits from this except the accused.

The Supreme Court of Canada acknowledges that unreasonable delays in the justice system are severely harmful for Canadians, so it set the Jordan decision as the guiding ruling for trial deadlines.

Despite these rules, despite the decision from the Supreme Court that delayed justice is unacceptable, the Liberal government continues to ignore this problem by appointing fewer judges to handle trials and other cases before the courts. It has failed. The government has had plenty of time to address this issue, two and a half years, to be exact, and it has had plenty of time to fill these judicial vacancies.

The Demkiw family is living a nightmare. They are constantly in my office in Saskatoon. They have had to take on enormous expense in order to cope with this terrible tragedy. They have had to take time from work to travel frequently between Saskatoon and Edmonton, and of course they are trying to support Dwayne Demkiw's youngest son.

I want to ask the minister once again, why has the government done so little to fill judicial vacancies at such a late stage in its mandate, two and a half years?

● (2405)

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise on the serious matter of judicial appointments. Since elected, our government has taken significant steps to ensure that the process for appointing judges is transparent and accountable to Canadians and promotes greater diversity on the bench. At the same time, we recognize the challenges courts face with respect to court delays, which have come under heightened scrutiny since the Supreme Court of Canada's Jordan decision.

We have demonstrated that we are committed to responding to these challenges by introducing Bill C-75. This bill promises substantive reform that will fundamentally address delays, and modernize our justice system.

Let me assure the member opposite that the minister is very mindful of the effect judicial vacancies can have on the effective operation of a court. The minister is absolutely committed to ensuring that the most meritorious candidates are appointed to the bench to meet the needs of all Canadians.

Since elected, our government has appointed or elevated 183 judges to superior courts across the country, including five in Saskatchewan, and today, the diversity of our appointments is unprecedented. Under our government, 57% of appointed or elevated judges are women, compared to just 32% under the previous government.

Our government is committed to continuing to strengthen our judiciary. Budget 2017 created funding for 28 new federally appointed judges. Using this funding, the minister has appointed judges to new judicial positions in Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador, with more such appointments to come.

Through budget 2018, we are creating 46 new judicial positions, including a judge for the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal. This new position would respond directly and positively to a request from Saskatchewan. This additional judge would assist that court, the highest court in the province, to address a growing number of civil and criminal appeals as well as increasingly complex matters. The amendment to add this position to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal is currently before Parliament in Bill C-74.

Fundamental to the judicial appointments process are the judicial advisory committees. They evaluate the applications of those who have put their names forward for judicial appointment and provide lists of highly recommended candidates to the Minister of Justice. As a result of the changes we introduced, the JACs are now more balanced and inclusive. We also made changes to help achieve a more representative bench, with a broader diversity of backgrounds and experience, allowing candidates to speak to their own understanding and experience of Canada's diverse makeup. We also increased our ability to validate candidates' bilingual capacity.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, that does not answer for the vacancies in Alberta, and 57 in this country. Two of our colleagues held a news conference in Calgary in April, the members for Calgary Nose Hill and St. Albert—Edmonton. Funny, because after the news conference, about judicial vacancies in Alberta, the next day they appointed one. Within a week to two weeks, five more were appointed in Alberta.

Do we have to have news conferences every week in the province of Alberta for the government to fill the eight vacancies they currently have?

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones: Mr. Speaker, to those who would accuse our government of inaction, let me highlight just a few of the ways we have acted decisively, and on multiple fronts, to ensure that the Canadian justice system is there for Canadians. To date, our government has appointed or elevated 183 judges across the country and has appointed 40 deputy judges in the territories.

Last year, 2017, was a record year. We appointed 100 judges—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. We only have one member recognized in the chamber at a time. I recognize that from time to time, a member will add a remark or two here or there, but ongoing banter is something that is too disruptive. I want to just have one member recognized at a time, and that, at the moment, is the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade.

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones: Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. colleague will be very interested to know that in 2017, we appointed 100 judges, more than any government in the past two decades. We created 28 new judicial positions in budget 2017 to respond to demonstrated workload increases on these same superior courts, including in the area of criminal law, and through budget 2018, we have proposed the creation of an additional 46 new judicial positions. That is 74 new federally appointed judges across our country to respond to the needs of the courts and the needs of Canadians.

As this brief account demonstrates, our government is dedicated to ensuring that our justice system is accessible, efficient, and effective for Canadians.

● (2410)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak tonight about Canada's important relationship with Taiwan. Canada does significant trade with Taiwan, and it is a strategic partner that shares our values. Taiwan is a Chinese democracy beacon for the mainland, a sign of what is possible.

When it comes to our foreign policy, the Conservatives are deeply committed to strengthening our relationship with like-minded partners in the Asia-Pacific region. We want Canada to deepen its partnership, in particular with countries like Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, and others in the region that share our commitment to freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. It is always easier to trade and partner in a variety of ways with those who share our values, with those whom we can trust to honour their commitments, and to treat our citizens with respect when they are there.

We have an opportunity to build partnerships with like-minded nations in this region to expand the sphere of freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law as well. We have a shared interest with these nations in preserving the international rules-based order.

As we think about that order, someone pointed out to me recently that China was using the Crimea model in the South China Sea. The Crimea model is the illegal territorial acquisition by the Russians, of Crimea. It is a process of inching forward, carefully trying to avoid provoking too much resistance from the west, proceeding step by step, with each step covered in lies and misinformation, with steps that do not, in each case, provoke a sufficient response but taken together lead to acquisitions that are clearly illegal.

At least in the case of Crimea, the western world responded with sanctions. Under a Conservative leadership, Canada played a leading role in that. However, the Liberal government has been virtually silent on the deployment of the Crimea model in this other case, with the creation and militarization of islands outside of China's territorial waters in the South China Sea. Our partnership with like-minded nations is so important to resisting this.

On the issue of Taiwan in general, we see the government, generally, totally silent. I have asked repeated questions about issues related to Taiwan in question period, and very often the government has simply shifted away to talk about how it wants to have a better relationship with the mainland, even if the question is specifically on the issue of Taiwan.

The Liberals have made perfunctory comments about the issue of Taiwan's involvement in the World Health Assembly, which is a critical issue. Taiwan has a significant contribution to make to this body. However, it is curious that repeatedly when questions about Taiwan come up, the government does not want to address that important relationship with Taiwan. It does not want to acknowledge the importance of that relationship for us strategically, economically, and on so many other fronts. Indeed, it is our 12th largest trading partner, as my colleague has pointed out. More than that, we share common values. We share a common strategic direction in the region.

Canada needs to be willing to call out violations of international law by China, and work with like-minded partners to resist that, rather than continually giving credence to the narrative by the mainland that is potentially used as a justification for subsequent illegal action against Taiwan. We want to prevent that from happening. We want to stand with Taiwan. We want to resist this progressive aggression we see from the mainland.

Will the parliamentary secretary finally speak definitively about the benefits of the Canada-Taiwan relationship and the need for strategic co-operation, as well as the need to stand up to bullying from the mainland with respect to this.

Another issue the government has not addressed is the issue with Air Canada, changing the designation of Taiwan, claiming that it is part of China. When Air Canada makes these statements, it is very damaging, yet the government has had nothing to say about this bullying of a Canadian company by the People's Republic of China.

Will the parliamentary secretary also choose this as an opportunity to address that issue with Air Canada, as well as the other issues that have been raised with respect to Taiwan?

● (2415)

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada was an active supporter of Taiwan's participation at the 2018 World Health Assembly, held recently, from May 21 to May 26. The Government of Canada called on the World Health Organization to extend an invitation to Taiwan to attend as an observer and was disappointed that an invitation was not issued. Taiwan has acknowledged and expressed its appreciation for Canada's support. Taiwan's role as an observer in the annual World Health Assembly meetings is in the interest of the international health community, and it is important in the fight against pandemics and disease.

In her address to the World Health Assembly in Geneva, on May 22, the hon. Minister of Health reaffirmed that, "Canada upholds the principle of universality in addressing health issues and global health inequalities and recognizes the transboundary nature of disease." She reaffirmed Canada's position that "it is important that all members of the global community be part of discussions on global health."

Since 1970, Canada has maintained our one-China policy, which recognizes the People's Republic of China as the legal government of China, while taking note of China's position on Taiwan and neither endorsing nor challenging it. Canada opposes any unilateral actions taken to alter the status quo or raise tensions across the Taiwan Strait. We regularly urge both sides of the strait to resume dialogue to resolve matters of importance to their citizens, particularly when it comes to matters of health, safety, and economic well-being.

Canada's one-China policy has allowed us to have robust and growing trade and people-to-people relations with Taiwan. Canada-Taiwan trade exceeded $7 billion in 2017, making Taiwan Canada's 12th-largest trading partner and fifth-largest partner in Asia.

Canadians and Taiwanese share a long-standing commitment to the universal values of freedom, democracy, and rule of law. We also have strong and growing people-to-people relations. Two-way tourism has surpassed 200,000 visitors per year, and Canada is a popular destination for Taiwanese students.

Canada and Taiwan co-operate in multilateral organizations, including APEC and the WTO. In other international multilateral fora, the Government of Canada has consistently supported Taiwan's meaningful participation, where its presence provides important contributions to the global public good, such as in relation to aviation security and global health.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary said something that I want to specifically ask a follow-up question about. She said that the Government of Canada opposes any change to the status quo with respect to the relationship between Taiwan and the mainland. Two months ago, China held live-fire drills in the Taiwan Strait. Does the parliamentary secretary believe that it is a violation of the status quo, and did Canada make statements with respect to live-fire drills in the Taiwan Strait?

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones: Mr. Speaker, Canadians and Taiwanese share many ties. We are committed to growing our significant people-to-people and trade relations with Taiwan. Canada is also committed to supporting Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations, such as the World Health Assembly, where its presence provides important contributions to the global public good.

As the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs told the House of Commons on May 17, 2017:

> Global health is a global responsibility. Germs do not know any borders. We welcome participation from all civil society and the entire global community, including Taiwan. We all have a stake when it comes to the health of humanity.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot not being present to raise the matter for which adjournment notice had been given, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 29, the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12:19 a.m.)

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